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PRAYER AS DIALOGUE:
" "
ITS THEORY AND APPLICATION

A Dissertation
Presented to
the Faculty of the
School of Theology at Claremont

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Religion

by
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" "
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This dissertation, written by

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and approved by its members, has been presented
to and accepted by the Faculty of the School of
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. PROLEGOMENA	1
The Question of Prayer	3
Theoretical Framework	5
Prayer as Dialogue	9
II. A METAPHYSICAL UNDERSTANDING OF DIALOGUE	
PRAYER	16
Nature of God	18
Religious Experience	24
Christian Prayer	26
Translation	27
Theological Instruction	32
Cultic Instruction	34
God's Needs	37
Man's Needs	40
III. APPLICATION OF DIALOGUE PRAYER	48
Learning to Dialogue	50
Dialogue with Images	54
Dialogue with Dreams	58
Dialogue with the Petitions of the	
Lord's Prayer	65
Dialogue with Jesus	68
Dialogue with the Scriptures	72

SUMMARY	73
BIBLIOGRAPHY	76
APPENDIX	80

CHAPTER I

PROLEGOMENA

Prayer is God's active relationship as that of an "intimate insider" in the micro-universe called Man.

---Frank Kimper

This dissertation proposes to establish the theory and application of the Gestalt "dialogue" as a possible new form of Christian prayer, being scripturally and metaphysically justifiable. This endeavor does not replace the traditional forms of Christian prayer--confession, petition, intercession, thanksgiving, etc.--for they are still valid and necessary for the Christian faith. However, a more secular approach may not only enhance the existing Christian prayer forms, but perhaps provide a new way of praying for those who no longer find the traditional prayer structures meaningful. In learning to do the "inner dialogue" with that God which is within us, nothing is needed outside of one's self. Too early a focus upon the application of the dialogue prayer may lead only to confusion and frustration. Therefore, in this first chapter the question of prayer in general, a theological framework for discussion, and the background and theory of the Prayer Dialogue are shared in hopes of laying groundwork for the following two chapters.

After this introductory chapter, Chapter II, "A Metaphysical Understanding of Prayer," attempts to describe how prayer works. The Lord's Prayer is used as the model for Christian prayer and in the last section of the chapter this prayer is related to the previous metaphysical speculations. Chapter III is the application of Prayer Dialogue. An eleven step discipline is proposed for use by future parishioners who have found the traditional prayer categories no longer meaningful, or those who seek a richer prayer life to complement the existing traditional prayers. The result of such an effort

is entitled, "The Application of Dialogue Prayer." This section is presented in hope that something new (or at least useful) is added to the understanding and application of Christian prayer.

THE QUESTION OF PRAYER

Has prayer a function for churchmen today? Is it possible to pray if there is doubt as to whether there is a God to whom one prays? Why even pray at all? Many Christians find themselves asking these and other questions. Perhaps a brief description of the cultural situation may provide a context for investigation.

Modern secular man is in the midst of revolution. Surrounded by rapid social change, man is finding fewer places, both internally and externally, for stability--those constants which anchor man. To be more precise, this constant revolution is described by Barbara Ward as the twofold process of "modernization";¹ and in a slightly different way by Kenneth Boulding as "the great transition."² These authors note that it is fundamentally a change in the whole structure of human culture which is being effected by modern Western science and technology and by the humanistic concern for modern man's emancipation. Schubert Ogden believes that the word "secularization" symbolizes these two forces of science and humanism; perhaps he is right.

¹Barbara Ward, *The Rich Nations and the Poor Nations* (New York: Norton, 1962), p. 51.

²Kenneth Boulding, *The Meaning of the Twentieth Century* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), p. 1.

Another problem facing the local churchman is the "theological revolution." It has been customary to conceive of God as eternal and immutable, or in Aristotle's terms, an "unmoved mover." The orthodox concept of God still seems to emphasize transcendence more than it does immanence. However, the implications of process theology tend to emphasize the actual involvement of God in life itself. God has become, for the modern process theologian, a growing self-actualizing God. Yet this concept of God is primarily found within the walls of seminaries and graduate schools of theology and philosophy. Many hundreds of books on prayer still stress God's transcendence above his immanence. *Both* are needed for an adequate picture of God's nature, but the latter needs to be investigated and expounded as the former has been traditionally. "The man who prays . . . knows that he has--in an incomprehensible way--an effect upon God, even though he obtains nothing from God."³ Or does he? It seems that even for the loyal and steadfast churchman prayer has lost much of its meaning. Why? The answers are as varied as the philosophers and theologians. Yet, there is one common point of agreement: the three-story universe is gone for modern secular man.

Many admit that they "ought" to let themselves be more inspired by prayer, and admit their guilt about not living up to the ought. Most churchmen have tried a few daily or weekly prayer disciplines, but those good intentions do not seem to last long. The modern

³Charles Hartshorne, *The Logic of Perfection* (La Salle: Open Court, 1961), p. 9.

churchman decides to turn for his inspiration to music, nature, art, or talking with friends. More importantly, the churchman seems to be getting along without prayer! Prayer has almost become any act of love, or deep involvement, or any participation in art or beauty, or anything which makes man more deeply human.

This dissertation is an attempt to give some cognitive affirmation and clarification to the intuitive feeling that there is hope for a meaningful prayer life. A "Whiteheadian Christian Natural Theology" (i.e., John Cobb) seems to provide the best possibility for recovering prayer. There is little reason for accepting natural theology as hostile to the Christian faith. Albert Outler dramatically relates to his students that the trouble with and the greatness of Christianity is that it is not a metaphysical system. It is God's self-revelatory love which reconciles separation, as symbolized by a man called Jesus the Christ. This certainly has ultimate metaphysical implications, but these are by no means prerequisite for accepting God's grace. In other theological circles, battles are still being fought over Bultmann --trying to discover whether he was striving to eliminate myth, make a genuinely hermeneutical effort to "understand" the Gospel, or whether he only created another mythology which modern man has adapted for his world views. Before further inquiry into these various theological speculations, however, a firmer foundation is needed. What are the criteria for even attempting to create a style of prayer?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

An understanding of prayer begins first with a clarification

of that to which Christian prayer is directed--God. Any Christian discussion of God can speak only of how God revealed and is revealing himself. A Christian is not looking for God; he has already been grasped by God. Therefore, the central event celebrated in Christian worship and proclamation is that God has made himself known in an event, and still *is* making himself known to man. Thomas Oden in his book, *Kerygma and Counseling*, writes: "The task of Christian theology is to clarify the meaning of the Christian faith, faith being understood as man's affirmative response to God's self-disclosure in Jesus Christ."⁴ Faith as a response to an event is only meaningful to those who respond to it. However, this response to God's self-disclosure (apprehended only by him who has ears to hear) is *not limited* to past revelation. Again, Albert Outler in his introduction to *John Wesley* writes that his authority for speaking of God is fourfold: "*Scriptural* truth *experienced* in life, made intelligible and self-consistent through *reasoning*, and mediated through the historic Christian *tradition*."⁵ The World Council of Churches at Augsburg in 1962 believed that it is only through a *traditioning* community that faith hears and responds to the word of God. The writing and canonizing of Scripture is itself an act of a *traditioning* community. However, "the witness of Scripture and tradition becomes intelligible only when symbolized in terms that are

⁴Thomas Oden, *Kerygma and Counseling* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1966), p. 31.

⁵Thomas Oden, *Structures of Awareness* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1969), p. 88.

experientially meaningful to oneself and others and then only when one consistently *reasons*."⁶ These four criteria are employed here as theological authority for making assertions concerning prayer.

All four criteria have the character of response to God's revelation. None of the four can be separated from the rest. None can claim exclusive priority as both the secularist and traditionalist would have men do. "We cannot base our affirmations about God's self-disclosure upon a mechanical Biblical literalism (fundamentalism), nor exclusively upon an ecclesiastical tradition that would claim to have an inerrant interpretation of it (ecclesiastical archaism), nor strictly upon its reasonableness and our rational analysis of it (rationalism), nor upon our experiencing the benefits of it (pietism)."⁷ An exclusive emphasis on any one without the others produces a weak and inadequate theological method.

Furthermore, a Christian's prayer life cannot be separated from his faith. The content of the Christian faith is God's self-disclosure to man. God not only disclosed himself to man in Christ, but is still disclosing himself to man. The Christian faith, then, is that which reveals to man the ways of God and man. However, God's revelation comes through events and individuals. Scripture claims that, since God is Spirit, the Spirit works through events and persons.

The content of the Christian faith is defined by the act of

⁶*Ibid.*

⁷Oden, *Kerygma and Counseling*, p. 33.

God in Christ and the message of this event. This is the most decisive revelation of God. Scripture and tradition have made themselves very clear at this point. John writes, "Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in me." (John 14:9.) Or, "He who has seen me has seen the Father." (John 14:9.) However, although God was decisively revealed in Jesus the Christ, this revelation still continues today. This revelation is not limited to the past. Experience verifies how this revelation of Christ is continuing to work anew in the lives of men; man can affirm all of creation, even with the absurdity.

This affirmation is faith. Faith is Man's yes to the self-disclosure of God. Faith cannot be separated from revelation, for faith is nothing in itself. To understand faith is to understand the revelation of God in Christ. Man's response to God's self-disclosure "creates" a relationship between God and man. God's love is ever before man, but when man responds to this gift of love a personal relationship emerges.

In other words, although faith is connected with morality, religion, and human attitude, it is yet unique to the individual person. "Faith understands the world and life in light of a reality lying beyond them, of a power lying beyond them, which is their origin and their Lord--i.e., God."⁸ Faith is not only knowledge of God, but also of his divine will. There are two different aspects of faith. One involves the personal relationship with God, as mentioned above.

⁸Rudolf Bultmann, *The Crisis of Faith* (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1955), p. 1.

This personal faith cannot be critically examined by another man, for one cannot see into his brother's heart. The other aspect of faith, however, is the reflective level which can be examined.

The Christian faith has relied heavily on the Holy Scriptures and tradition. Scriptures are the norm of the Church's life. They bear witness to God's revelation and fulfillment in Jesus Christ, and to man's response to Divine revelation; they testify to the whole of creation. Tradition witnesses to the fact that the whole life of the Church is guided and nourished by the Holy Spirit. Thus, tradition includes the act of delivery of the Good News as well as the teachings and practices handed down from one generation to another.

The New Testament is an expression of tradition. Scripture is a part of tradition since the life of the Church includes worship, teaching, and the Church's authority. The Scriptures are read in the light of tradition, and they are the supreme guardian and expression of tradition. With these assumptions stated, one can now proceed to formulate a definition of prayer as Dialogue.

PRAYER AS DIALOGUE

What is the nature of God's relation to the universe, and the character of his activity in it, and how does this relate to prayer? One way to approach this question is in terms of experience. What is God's relationship to that micro-universe called man? Man is not the organizing and energizing principle sustaining the order and vitality of his body; some of that energy is God. In this definition of prayer

Frank Kimper has greatly assisted. He believes that "in this micro-universe God and I are intimately related as co-habitants with a common destiny."⁹ Man's contribution toward this common destiny is to be aware of and respond to the possibility of each given moment of his life. God's activity, therefore, can be understood as that of the "intimate insider."

The intention of this 'intimate insider' in every occasion of experience is to encourage and facilitate the actualization of the greatest possibility inherent within each micro-universe, and to achieve harmony among the many micro-universes making up the whole.¹⁰

Praying offers man an opportunity to share with God an awareness of actualizing to its maximum each occasion of experience. Although this type of awareness comes in each moment of man's experience, praying specifically focuses on being sensitive and open to awareness of God's maximum possibility. In this way man's experience of reality can be deepened. Reuel Howe in his book, *The Miracle of Dialogue*, indicates that the principle of dialogue is openness to the other side, with a willingness not only to speak but to respond to what we hear.¹¹ Prayer as dialogue is being open and responding to God.

The great danger in analyzing prayer is to defend prayer as only an abstraction. Prayer as a dialogue with God as the intimate

⁹Frank Kimper, "Musings About the Dynamics of Prayer," (unpublished class presentation, School of Theology at Claremont, 1971).

¹⁰*Ibid.*

¹¹Reuel Howe, *The Miracle of Dialogue* (New York: Seabury Press, 1963), p. 23.

insider keeps this from happening. Perhaps, if one understands the inner attitudes, spiritual aim or intellectual presuppositions which underlie prayer, he may have a more adequate definition of prayer. A devout person who prays believes in some way that he is speaking with a personal and immediate presence. Prayer as an inner dialogue carries this belief to its logical extension. Representing the Church's tradition, Friedrich Heiler in his classic book *Prayer*, describes three elements which form the inner structure of the prayer experience: "faith in a living God, faith in his real immediate presence, and a realistic fellowship into which man enters with a God conceived as present."¹² Understanding prayer as dialogue does not contradict this classic definition. If prayer can be defined as a living relationship of man to God, it can be said to be a type of communion--a common-union of "I" and "Thou." In other words, prayer, as further explained in the next chapter, refers to the dialogue in the larger sense by Martin Buber. It is the regular and disciplined meeting in a structured context, where the pattern and direction of the individual's life can be examined objectively, interpreted, evaluated, and drawn toward his maximum occasion of possibility.

A complete doctrine of prayer cannot be set forth in this dissertation. J. J. von Allmen in *Worship: Its Theology and Practice* remarks that a theological study of prayer has not yet been undertaken in the church.

¹² Friedrich Heiler, *Prayer* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1932), p. 355.

This remark is not quite accurate, at least in essence, for every authentic theology is a theology of prayer since, as the Orthodox Church says, the theologian is not so much one who knows the history and technique of theology as one who knows how to pray.¹³

Thus, he concludes that prayer is (as noted in the Heidelberg Catechism--question #116) "the chief part of that thanksgiving which requires of us."¹⁴ Hence prayer defined as "dialogue" does not add a new dimension to prayer, but makes explicit that which is already implicit in the Christian tradition. As early as 1530, prayer as dialogue was illustrated by Thomas Kempis in his spiritual classic, *Imitation of Christ*. From a psychological point of view the first three books appear to be a dialogue between one's personality and the inner Christ.

Everyone has within them a spiritual self; in process theology this is called the immanent nature of God, or the "intimate insider." In the Prayer Dialogue, an inner journey is made through the levels of the conscious and unconscious mind to help encourage and facilitate the actualization of each occasion of man's experience. Through structured conversation (dialogue), one projects part of one's self either into an empty chair or into his imagination and carries on a conversation. Many times the response to one's projection is immediate, spontaneous and healing; it is received with clarity and comes with authority. Yet, sometimes the response is delayed, and comes later.

¹³J. J. von Allmen, *Worship* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 157.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, p. 158.

In this technique of inner dialogue one should put the emphasis on the dialogue itself, more than on the spiritual inner self. Usually, in psychotherapy, it is found that in the Gestalt chair Dialogue what really interests the client is not the answer or response but the dialogue itself and *not* the way and means to reach it. In theological language, it can be said that God's relationship is always present. The individual is never alone and God (the inner spiritual self) is never purely transcendent but always in living relationship with His manifestations. Dialogue as prayer is simply a technique for getting in touch with this relationship.

This way of praying aims at integration--the original, undistorted, natural approach to man's acting, thinking, feeling. Modern man has lost his wholeness; his life is full of splits. To come together again, man has to heal the dualism of his person, of his thinking, and his language. This dualistic approach of thinking in opposites--body and mind, organism and environment, self and reality--needs to be dissolved. Yet, in the inner dialogue there exists a concrete dialectic between the finite and infinite; this is not dualism. The dialectic integration begins with awareness. Awareness of what man's unconscious is saying to him. Awareness of the needs that he is acting out. Awareness that man's life is one of splits seeking wholeness. Perhaps an illustration would help clarify this need for awareness.

Psychotherapy shows that awareness is the first step in man's struggle for wholeness. Wilhelm Reich was correct in his interpretation

of repression. "Once some organismic need is condemned, the ego turns its creative activity as aggression against the disowned impulse, subduing and controlling it."¹⁵ Therefore, Reich shifted the accent from Freud's recovery of the "repressed" to reorganizing the "repressing" forces. Yet, when the patient becomes aware of the "means" whereby he represses, one finds a surprising inconsistency. The patient is, on one hand, aware and proud of it when he uses energies against himself, as in self control; yet on the other hand, he is for the most part unable to relinquish his self control. "In therapy, the aim is to shift the 'inner conflict' that occurs between impulse and the counter-attacking resistance, into an open, aware conflict."¹⁶ Ideally, the therapist needs to find a context which allows play between the extremes of constantly observing the resistances (teaching the patient to become morbidly introspective) and not allowing the patient to wander everywhere (Freud's free-associating). In other words, man needs to become aware not only of "what" he represses, but also "how" he represses.

Fritz Perls in his early book, *Ego, Hunger and Aggression* asserts the following theory:

In the struggle for survival the most relevant need becomes figure and organizes the behavior of an individual until this need is satisfied. Whereupon it recedes into the background (temporary balance) and makes room for the next 'now' most important need. In the healthy organism this change of dominance has the best survival chance. In our society, such dominant needs, for example morals, etc., often become chronic and interfere with the subtle self-regulating of the human organism.¹⁷

¹⁵ Frederick Perls, Ralph E. Hefferline, and Paul Goodman, *Gestalt Therapy* (New York: Dell, 1951), p. x.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. xi.

Through the use of the dialogue, a concrete method of helping modern man reorganize his dominate needs and help him regain his self-regulating function is established. This methodology is dared to be called a form of prayer. What is the great need to use this psychological process as prayer?

Alexis Carrell, scientist and physician, once wrote: "Prayer is the most important form of energy that one can generate. In prayer we link ourselves with inexhaustible power that spins the universe."¹⁸ This approach to prayer as energy release needs to be recovered by the church. Man cannot force this release of energy, this growth toward God. Yet, through an effective prayer discipline, one can release this energy. Fritz Perls through his use of dialogue discovered ways for releasing this energy within men. The question is no longer why call this process a form of praying, but can this process be incorporated to fill the void experienced by many churchmen today when it comes to a fruitful prayer life. A definition of energy by Whitehead and Hartshorne which might be applied to this understanding of prayer is discussed in the next chapter. Dialogue is not meant to replace the traditional forms of prayer--confession, petition, intercession, thanksgiving, etc. Hopefully, those forms are enhanced because more energy can be released allowing for a greater participation.

¹⁸Flora S. Wuellner, *To Pray and to Grow* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1970), p. 32.

CHAPTER II

A METAPHYSICAL UNDERSTANDING OF DIALOGUE PRAYER

"God is imperiled. He is not Almighty, that we may cross our hands, waiting for certain victory. He is not all-holy, that we may wait trustingly for him to pity and to save us.

Within the province of our ephemeral flesh all of God is imperiled. He cannot be saved unless we save him with our own struggles; nor can we be saved unless he is saved."

---Nikos Kazantzakis
The Saviors of God

Frank Kimper's definition of prayer was adopted for this dissertation in the previous chapter. It was said that God's activity is that of an "intimate insider." "The intention of this 'intimate insider' in every occasion of experience is to encourage and facilitate the actualization among the many micro-universes making up the whole."¹ Therefore, prayer is man's cooperation with God's intention for man. In praying, man offers God an opportunity to share in man's finitude. In one sense, praying is being open to the possibility of letting happen that which is already seeking to happen in man. Meister Eckhart illustrates this type of relationship between man and God: "The Knower and the Known are one. Simple people imagine that they should see God as if He stood there and they here. God and I, we are one in Knowledge."² This type of knowing may be similar to the way a husband may know his wife, or a man a beloved friend. It is as a 'lure' for growth and love--that of an intimate insider.

This chapter seeks to discover what kind of communication prayer is. Said another way, How does prayer work? How does having a dialogue with one's self have anything to do with prayer? The answers to these questions require a metaphysical foundation. Whitehead defines metaphysics as: "The science which seeks to discover the general ideas which are indispensably relevant to the analysis

¹Frank Kimper, "Musings About the Dynamics of Prayer," (unpublished class presentation, School of Theology at Claremont, 1971).

²F. C. Happold, *Prayer and Meditation* (Baltimore: Penguin, 1971), p. 33.

of everything that happens."³ This chapter begins with a description of the world; then the nature of God is discussed in hopes that one may more rationally understand how the immanent nature of God can be that of an 'intimate insider.' A further description of religious experience is presented next. The chapter concludes with an attempt to integrate these descriptions with the Christian understanding of prayer.

THE NATURE OF GOD

Relevant to prayer are several introductory statements concerning the nature of the universe.⁴ The universe is process. Everything in the real world is composed ultimately of very complex single and separate energy events in succession (process). An energy event, usually called an actual occasion, is that which is no longer divisible when a substance is divided. A portion of light is a simple energy event; man is an extremely complex society of energy events. Each energy event (actual occasion) integrates both history and possibility in each moment of its existence. The goal of this integrative process of past and present is satisfaction. Satisfaction is defined in terms of the realization of the possibilities in each present moment of

³ Alfred North Whitehead, *Religion in the Making* (New York: World, 1926), p. 82.

⁴ For a more detailed discussion, one can turn to John Cobb's book--*A Christian Natural Theology; based on the Thought of Alfred North Whitehead*. This is the best interpretation I have found on the subject.

experience. The fuller the realization of the most valuable possibilities, the greater the satisfaction of each occasion. Each new moment of experience presents a completely new possibility for fulfillment which is not dependent upon the degree of fulfillment in the previous moment. However, specific possibilities in each new occasion of experience are dependent on the past occasion. Each occasion is responsible for its own satisfaction. This determines the integrating process. God is present in each actual occasion as an active participant. God gives each occasion direction and everlasting significance. Although God is active in several ways in this process, the one most relevant to prayer is that called initial aim.

The initial aim of each occasion is derived from God; therefore, man has a direct experience of God. This experience is felt by man with some valuation, similar to a "lure." The closer each person comes to determining his own satisfaction from the hierarchy of possibilities in each initial aim, the higher the degree of satisfaction of each occasion. Technically, this complicated process may be clarified by Whitehead and other "process" theologians.

Whitehead provides a very detailed analysis of experience as a process of integration whereby an initial multiplicity of direct feelings of other actualities fuse together with the help of supplemental feelings to achieve a unified outcome.⁵ This difference between

⁵ Lewis Ford, "Divine Persuasion and the Triumph of Good," in Delwin Brown, *et al.*, *Process Philosophy and Christian Thought* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1971), p. 299.

initial, physical, conformal feelings and supplemental, conceptual feelings can shed light on the meaning of divine experience--an aspect of praying. In the initial phase, God experiences each actuality just as it is for itself. At this phase God is completely vulnerable, open to all the evil and tragedy of the world. God faces disappointment in the disparity between the initial ideal he proposed for any occasion and its subsequent faulty actualization. Lewis Ford in his essay on the "Divine Persuasion and the Triumph of God" writes:

God is a most sensitive individual, with the highest ideals, constantly thwarted at every turn, yet who resolutely refuses to give up his grasp on either ideality or actuality. At the same time, however, he is also a most imaginative being, whose unlimited conceptual resources enable him to transmute this suffering into joy and peace.⁶

A problem may arise for some about God's transcendence. It may be that the basic meaning of transcendence is concerned with the problem of protection. Since all realization is finite, actuality may be defined as a process of selection. Since not all possibilities can be realized at once, only concrete things can be actualized. Therefore, God is the principal of limitation which involves selection, limitation, and exclusion. Since possibilities are mutually contradictory, the principal of harmony must be exemplified in all actual processes to some degree. In God's primordial nature, God is the conceptual ordering of all eternal objects and possibilities such that a graded scale of relevance is established between each possibility

⁶*Ibid.*

and each actual entity.⁷ This ordering of possibility constitutes the abstract nature of God--the principle of concretion. God's consequent nature enables one to understand how the principle of harmony functions.

Charles Hartshorne brilliantly illustrates this principle of harmony figuratively when he writes in his brief essay, "Divine Absoluteness and Divine Relativity":

God includes us by knowing us . . . What the knower determines is his response to objects, which must be already determinate or there is nothing to know. Not that we could be what we are without God, but that the power of God over us consists in his being the supreme object of our awareness (largely unconscious, not knowledge in the fullest sense). God influences us by letting us be aware of him rather than simply by his awareness of us.

True, the importance of God for us as our supreme object arises from his uniquely adequate awareness of us (we love him because he first loved us); but God as influencing me now is God as knowing me as I have been, not as I am now. God as knowing me as I am now will not influence that state of me. The model of influence is the *dialogue*. I speak, you listen; then you speak and I listen. Buber was right; there is nothing higher than the I-Thou relation. But in this relation there is always a time difference between stimulus and response; indeed, responses are the only stimuli. And knowledge is simply the adequate response.⁸

Technically, Whitehead illustrates the same understanding of God's consequent nature.

Whitehead believes that in God's consequent nature God's aim, like that of the creature, is at beauty. "God's purpose in the

⁷Bernard M. Loomer, "Christian Faith and Process Philosophy," in Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

⁸Charles Hartshorne, "Divine Absoluteness and Divine Relativity," in Herbert Richardson and O. Cutler (eds.) *Transcendence* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), p. 166.

creative advance is the evocation of intensities."⁹ In trying to balance these intensities to overcome the mutual obstructiveness of things, God therefore "seeks in his experience of the world, the maximum attainment of intensity compatible with harmony that is possible under the circumstances of the actual situation."¹⁰ God provides to each occasion an initial aim, which if actualized, would contribute maximally to this harmonious intensity.¹¹ "Divine love and justice may serve as primary symbols for God's aim at the harmonious intensity of beauty."¹²

Frank Kimper illustrates the above discussion when he concludes in his "Report on Johnson, Chardin, Cobb":

Johnson, Teilhard de Chardin, Whitehead and Cobb because they tend to perceive the universe as a living organism, and God as the 'living soul' of it, suggest an environment within which praying may be understood as a process of becoming increasingly aware of, and increasingly responsive to, the Soul of the whole.

The attitude of humility which 'inherits the earth' comes naturally within the perspective of intimate, organismic participation in the pulse-beat of the total universe. And praying opens up the possibility for achieving such perspective.

The spirit of adventure which 'grasps for the ideal' comes spontaneously within the perspective of intimate involvement in the thrust of the universe toward harmony, and praying opens

⁹ Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality* (New York: Free Press, 1929), p. 161.

¹⁰ Ford, *op. cit.*, p. 295.

¹¹ John B. Cobb, Jr., *A Christian Natural Theology* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1965), p. 243.

¹² Ford, *op. cit.*, p. 296.

up the possibility for sensing the 'growing edge of change' in that direction. To become aware of the potential for wholeness in the novel, and of an invitation to realize that potential--this is for me the challenge and excitement inherent in the experience of praying!

And in praying I may sense a Presence whose thrust toward the ideal includes my own ultimate satisfaction, and invites my intimate participation in mutual endeavor. Seeking knowledge of the ideal possibility in each occasion of experience--the possibility God is offering as the ideal response in that particular moment; and responding to whatever wisdom is perceptible--this is for me the interplay which describes the experience of praying as fellowship with God in a common purpose! With the joy of fellowship as special bonus!¹³

In summary, one dimension of prayer can be understood as the method of getting in touch with the greatest of the possibilities in the initial aim. This is a direct experience of God, who invites participation in the mutual endeavor. Secondly, grace is inherent in each structure of existence and is found immediately in man's experience. The possibility for fullness (satisfaction) in each moment of man's experience is not lessened by his sin (choosing a lesser possibility from the hierarchy of possibilities in the initial aim). "Each new moment of experience brings forgiveness as a gift and the possibility to try again."¹⁴ Hartshorne believes God's influence (initial aim) is the dialogue. Prayer as Dialogue is an attempt to achieve this relation to which Hartshorne alludes. Man can become more aware, through this method, of God's greatest possibility (lure) for his life.

¹³Kimper, *op. cit.*

¹⁴Al Campbell, "Pastoral Counseling as Prayer," (unpublished class presentation, School of Theology at Claremont, 1971).

RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

Hartshorne grants that "God" is a religious term, and believes that theology is an attempt to describe the object of that religious devotion. He writes in his essay, "The Formally Possible Doctrines of God":

It is a belief of many today that the 'new' theology is more, not less, religious than the old, at least if religious means 'devoted love for a being regarded as superlatively worthy of love,' which is the Christian conception and to some extent the concept of the higher religions generally.¹⁵

Hartshorne would agree with Alfred Whitehead who goes further in his early book, *Religion in the Making*, to describe religion and religious experience:

It was stated that 'Religion is force of belief cleansing the inward parts'; and again, that 'Religion is the art and theory of the internal life of man, so far as it depends on the man himself, and on what is permanent in the nature of things'; and again, 'Religion is what the individual does with his own solitariness.'¹⁶

Whitehead continues by noting that while this growth process in man's discovery of God is not linear and irreversible, it is helpful to see this growth in stages. Man's experience of his situation in the world makes him ask the question: "What, in the way of value, is the attainment of life?" This stage of growth begins with three fundamental concepts unified in one moment of self-consciousness. These concepts are:

¹⁵ Charles Hartshorne, "The Formally Possible Doctrine of God," in Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 189.

¹⁶ Whitehead, *Religion in the Making*, p. 58.

1. The value of an individual for itself.
2. The values of the diverse individuals of the world for each other.
3. The value of the objective world which is a community derivative from the interrelations of its component individuals and is also necessary for the existence of each of these individuals.¹⁷

In other words, "man's consciousness of God begins with self-valuation, broadens into the intuition of the character of the universe as a realm of interrelated values, and finally, of adjusted values."¹⁸ However, this experimental dimension does not consist exclusively in intuition of a personal God, even though God is directly present within human experience. For if religious experience did belong exclusively to this private heightened emotional state, there would be no broad foundation of agreement to which one could appeal. Therefore, reason helps to objectify man's encounter with God, although his heightened emotional state is equally involved. The religious experience has to do with man's direct but mediated experience of permanence with novelty within the intelligible unity of man's life.

But there is a larger consensus, on the part of those who have rationalized their outlook, in favor of the concept of the rightness of things, partially conformed to and partially disregarded. So far as there is conscious determination of actions, the attainment of this conformity is an ultimate premise by reference to which our choice of immediate ends is criticized and swayed.¹⁹

¹⁷*Ibid.*, p. 59.

¹⁸Walter E. Stokes, "God for Today and Tomorrow," in Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 248.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, p. 249.

In other words, man's valuing experience involves the intuition of permanence with novelty grounded in the presence of a transcendent source of order in the world.²⁰

In summary, religion seeks to enhance the role of ethical aspiration embodied in initial aims by concentrating their source in God. God is the ultimate source of value, as well as being that actuality in which all other actualities achieve their ultimate significance; therefore, God is worthy of worship. God entertains possibilities for man's life. If man can appropriate these divine goals-for-man as goals-for-himself, then the orientation of his behavior is, in terms of ends, identical with God's. This orientation will be achieved, presumably, only to the degree that man also appropriates God's system of values as his own.²¹ Prayer enables man in this process. How does this brief introduction into a Whiteheadian metaphysics relate concretely to prayer?

CHRISTIAN PRAYER

Before further speculation on the Whiteheadian approach to prayer, some explanation is necessary concerning the nature of Christian prayer.

²⁰*Ibid.*

²¹George Allen, "The Aims of Societies and the Aims of God," in Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 470.

The Lord's Prayer is the highest, noblest, and best prayer; all other prayers shall be suspect which do not have or contain the content and meaning of this prayer.

---Martin Luther²²

The Lord's Prayer needs to be interpreted if it is not only to be understood, but also prayed. This brief prayer of the historical Jesus must be read in light of Jesus' teaching concerning God, the Kingdom, forgiveness, and the deliverance from evil. To abstract it from its context in the Sermon on the Mount is not to do justice to its historical setting either. Most of the books written on the Lord's Prayer are devotional in character rather than exegetical.²³ Hans Dieter Betz' interpretation is not only creative, but most importantly, it is closer to Jesus' meaning and the early Church's understanding of the Prayer than any other source investigated. In this section, the translation, form, style, Old Testament context, Jesus' personal prayer life and other parallels will be briefly discussed. Then Betz' two categories of theological instruction, and cultic instruction, are employed for a closer interpretation of the prayer.

²²Charles Laymon, *The Lord's Prayer in Its Biblical Setting* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1968), p. 11.

²³I am deeply obligated to Dieter Betz' interpretation of this prayer in his class presentation of April 1, 1971.

TranslationMatthew 6:7-15

- 7 When you pray, do not babble like the Gentiles for they think they will be heard by God because of their verbosity.
- 8 Do not become like them, for God your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.

Luke 11:1-4

- 1 And it happen when he was at a certain place praying, as he finished, someone from his disciples said to him, 'Lord, teach us to pray like also John (the Baptist) taught his disciples'
- 9a Pray then like this:
- b Our Father
c who art in Heaven
d may thy name be hallowed
- 10a May thy kingdom come;
b May thy will come to pass
c as in heaven so also on earth;
- 11a Our bread for the morrow
b give us today;
- 12a And forgive us our debts,
b as we also have forgiven our debtors;
- 13a And do not lead us into temptation,
b but deliver us from evil
(or, the evil one)
c (Some MSS of Matthew--W,H, 13, etc., Byz., Sy^c, Sa, Did.-- contain an added doxology:) because thine is the Kingdom and the power and the glory forever.
- 14a For if you forgive men their transgressions
b your Father in heaven will forgive also you;
- 15a But if you do not forgive men their trespasses,
b neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.
- 2a And he (Jesus) said to them, when you pray, say:
b Father,
c may thy name be hallowed;
d May thy kingdom come
- 3a Our bread for the morrow
b give us day by day;
- 4a And forgive us our sins,
b for we ourselves also forgive all who are indebted to us;
c And do not lead us into temptation.

There are several questions needing to be discussed. How is it that about the year A.D. 75, the Lord's Prayer was being transmitted and prayed in two forms which diverged from each other? Secondly, which of these two forms is to be regarded as original? The two versions of the prayer differ in the form of statement, in length, and in situational background. Did the Lord's Prayer as found in Matthew and Luke come from the "Q" source? Since the form of the two accounts varies more than usual in the use of "Q," a deeper explanation is needed. There are several explanations available. Ernst Lohmeyer believes that from the beginning the Lord's Prayer was in two forms.²⁴ "The meter of the version in Matthew is reminiscent of the prophets and psalmists."²⁵ Therefore, it may have a Galilean background. Luke's version, however, is more Aramaic in character and may have a broader Palestinian source; Jeremias is in agreement.

The differences are to be explained by the fact that they are directed at very different groups of people. The Matthean catechism on prayer is addressed to people who have learned to pray in childhood but whose prayer stands in danger of becoming a routine. The Lucan catechism on prayer is addressed to people who must for the first time learn to pray and whose courage to pray must be aroused.²⁶

Therefore Jeremias would believe Matthew is addressing his prayer to Jewish-Christians; whereas, Luke is addressing Gentile-Christians. However, the second question still remains, "Which of these two forms

²⁴Laymon, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

²⁵*Ibid.*

²⁶Joachim Jeremias, *The Prayers of Jesus* (Naperville: Allenson, 1967), p. 88.

is to be regarded as original?"

Although it is impossible to say with certainty which form was written earlier, several good speculations can be asserted. Usually in such determination of earliest authorship, biblical scholars consider the shorter form as earlier. Therefore, most scholars consider the Lucan form as earlier, perhaps even original (did not Jesus urge brevity in praying?). Furthermore, Matthew's version in its poetic form was shaped largely by its liturgical use. (W. D. Davies has an excellent account of the Lord's Prayer liturgical use.) Perhaps, additional interpretive phrases would help a new communicant in the church understand what Jesus meant in prayer. However, E. F. Scott argues for the priority of Matthew's version in his book, *The Lord's Prayer*. Scott argues that in handling historical tradition, passages may be shortened as well as lengthened. But who would dare shorten our Lord's words? Secondly, Scott argues that Luke is abrupt and does not have the poetic quality that characterizes so many of Jesus' teachings. Finally, Scott concludes:

The fact that the *Didache*, a manual of church order of the middle of the second century A.D., carries Matthew's form rather than Luke's indicates the customary use in that day. It also suggests that Matthew 'gives the words of Jesus as nearly as they could be remembered by those who heard them first.'²⁷

Scott's last argument is not as convincing as the other scholars, yet he illustrates that this question is not entirely settled.

²⁷Laymon, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

Dr. Betz has suggested a history of tradition for the Lord's Prayer. The two earliest sources were contemporary Jewish prayers and Jesus' own contribution which merged to become the Lord's Prayer (probably the earliest form as represented in Luke). The longer form of the prayer, again being influenced by Jewish-Christian worship and interpretation, evolved into a longer version (v. 9-13). Verses 14 and 15 were added as sacred law of the Christian community along with the community's theological reflection as found in verses 7 and 8. Matthew's version of the prayer (Matt. 6:7-15) was then formally used in the *Didache*. The context was expanded by the early Christian community (Matt. 6:1-18) and used as cultic instruction.²⁸ Before exposition of the prayer itself, it is important to further illustrate this background of tradition.

The prayers of the Old Testament, whether those of kings, prophets, or psalmists, reveal a very personal relational existence between the Israelites and God. The Lord's Prayer belongs within the context of this same living relationship to God. The Hebrews were a praying people; therefore, the Lord's Prayer must be understood with this same historical context of Judaic-Christian revelation. The patriarchs, Moses, kings, prophets, psalmist, all prayed, yet something is different. Gustaf Dalman writes: "Composed under the inspiration of Hebraic ideas, modelled to a large extent on Jewish forms, it (the

²⁸Dieter Betz, "Sermon on the Mount" (unpublished class presentation, School of Theology at Claremont, 1971).

Lord's Prayer) was not in its primitive form a mosaic but a whole and fresh design."²⁹ This "whole and fresh design" was given by Jesus.

As Günther Bornkamm says: "The Lord's Prayer which Jesus teaches his disciples might truly be called the summary of all his sayings about prayer."³⁰ Although the Lord's Prayer cannot be understood apart from the background of the Hebrew people, it can be interpreted only in relation to Jesus' own practice of praying. Or as E. F. Scott writes: "The prayer he (Jesus) taught his disciples is the final outcome of all his thinking on this central act of worship. . . . All that they teach us is illustrated in his prayer."³¹ Prayer was a constant attitude of the soul for Jesus.

Theological Instruction

v. 7 'When you pray, do not babble like the Gentiles for they think they will be heard by God because of their verbosity.

v. 8 Do not become like they, for God your Father knows what you need before you ask him.'

The context of vs. 7-8 is a carefully composed and formed instructional introduction to the Lord's Prayer. It begins and ends with the same word and with the same notion of prayer. "Do not babble like the pagans" is a statement of rejection of the pagan practice. V. 8a is an appeal to the Christians and v. 8b is a statement of the

²⁹Laymon, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

³⁰Günther Bornkamm, *Jesus of Nazareth* (New York: Harper & Row, 1960), p. 136.

³¹E. F. Scott, *The Lord's Prayer* (New York: Scribners, 1951), p. 8.

Christian theory of prayer. A deeper exegesis reveals several insights. In v. 7, the word "gentiles" is probably used by Jewish-Christian congregations. Ecc. 5:1 warns not to repeat words in prayer. It was a Jewish custom to cut prayers short, yet sometimes people felt that longer prayers equalled being heard by God. V. 7b reveals the theory behind this conclusion. Some words have magical power which repeated often will increasingly influence the Gods.

V. 8 is the Christian answer to the question in ancient religion, "Why does man pray?" This theory asserts that the Christian prays because a need arises. This Christian theory of prayer is directly opposed to pagan theory and practice. The pagan theory first informs gods about things they might otherwise not know. Secondly, the prayer is meant to evoke the gods' help (if necessary, by magic). Thirdly, if the gods "come through," then the pagan offers thanksgiving and praise. The Christian re-interpretation of pagan theory is a revision of the idea of need which must be seen in the context of 6:1, concerning the hiddenness of God. God knows what man needs before he prays. God does not need to be informed or be magically encouraged to do something.

Dieter Betz offers an original interpretation of the Lord's Prayer as a statement concerning two fundamental needs-- (1) the needs of God, and (2) the needs of man. This concept of need radically frees prayer from the realm of magic. "Why should man pray?" Because man needs to pray. The Lord's Prayer is a cultic example of what prayer ought to be and contain. The most fundamental needs of man are

the needs of God. God's needs are that his name be sanctified, his Kingdom come, his will be fulfilled. If those needs of God are taken care of, so are man's basic needs. However, God's needs are not met. Ultimately, only God can take care of His needs, but man prays in order to help God. Man prays to God to handle God's own needs. In addition, man confesses that man's needs are God's needs and that man depends upon God to look after his own needs. However, man has three fundamental needs which are not God's. Man has the need for: (1) food, (2) forgiveness, and (3) protection against temptation. These are being met daily (for the most part) by God's action, although it may not be self-evident. The situation arises in which man's needs are met and God's are not. Therefore, man ultimately suffers because God's needs are not yet met.³²

Cultic Instruction

V. 9 'Pray then like this: Our Father who art in heaven.'

First, "Pray thou like this" is an important introduction. Jesus is teaching men how to pray. Luke even sets this reference in the framework of a separate scene. "Lord teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples." Therefore, it may not have been unusual for a spiritual leader to teach prayer (as perhaps John did with his disciples). Perhaps the historical Jesus did mean this instruction to become the source of all further instruction in prayer. Most importantly, Jesus did not seek to teach us a prayer--but taught his disciples

³²Betz, *op. cit.*

"how" to pray. Therefore, man is liberated from the anxious and superstitious use of formulas. Secondly, the word "our" in the address of the Lord's Prayer as found in Matthew may be significant. Luke's single word "Abba" is nearer to the Aramaic which Jesus customarily used. Perhaps, the early church used "our" to show that God was his, as his Father was theirs. Does the "our" refer only to the twelve to whom the prayer was given, or indirectly all members of the total Christian community? If God is the Father of all men, then potentially this is a prayer of all humanity. If this hypothesis is correct, then the Lord's Prayer goes beyond the limitations and particularism of traditional Jewish prayer.

Jeremias believes that perhaps "Abba" is the central message of the Gospel. In his book, *The Prayers of Jesus*, he develops the history and context for this term. In building an excellent case for his claim, Jeremias tends to romanticize the "child-like" faith he wants man to have. Jeremias is essentially correct by relating how the term "Abba" does deal with the unique revelation and authority given to Jesus. Jesus bases his authority on the fact that God reveals himself to him like a father to his son. "My Father is thus a word of revelation."³³ This revelation represents the central statement of Jesus' mission. Furthermore, Jeremias asserts that there is nothing in Rabbinic literature which corresponds to this use of "my Father" by Jesus.³⁴

³³ Jeremias, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

It was as the Son (the Messiah) that Jesus knew God to be "Father." Furthermore, Fernand Cabrol writes: "None except baptized Christians were allowed to recite it publicly because not until they had been made children of God by baptism had they the right to address Him as 'Our Father.'"³⁵ As a son in baptism who is restored by grace, the believer can call God Father. The term "Abba" indicates indirectly God's initiative and man's responsibility to that relationship. To say "Father" demands obedience to the Father. Sinful man in praying is re-establishing communion between he and God. Finally, if the early Jewish-Christian community were adopted sons of God, then the address "Father" may have emphasized Christian community. Robert Simpson in his book, *The Interpretation of Prayer in the Early Church*, sums up part of the meaning of the address "Abba" when he writes:

The initiation of prayer from the divine side, the participation in prayer from the human side, and the divine response to the petitions of prayer involve only one movement; that movement may be termed reconciliation (the narrowing of the distance between God and man) or revelation (in which man's knowledge of and so participation in the divine life increase as God imparts it to man).³⁶

Prayer moves beyond a relationship to a gift from God of himself. In addressing a Father "who art in Heaven" man recognizes the gap between Heaven and earth; therefore, he *cannot* bargain with God, as did the pagans. Man the creature owes all to his Creator, and the

³⁵Fernand Cabrol, *Liturgical Prayer* (London: Burns, Oates & Washbourne, 1925), p. 89.

³⁶Robert Simpson, *The Interpretation of Prayer in the Early Church* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1965), p. 153.

relationship is that of trust.

God's Needs

V. 9d ' . . . may thy name be hallowed'

The state of being in a new faith relationship is further indicated in the exegesis of the first three petitions. "Each of these petitions seeks for the new faith relation to be cemented and fulfilled 'in nobis'--the hallowing of God's name by our praise, the will of God being done 'by us,' the Kingdom coming to exercise its reign 'in us.' Thus, the content of our witness to God is that he is the Holy One, the Mighty One, the King."³⁷ Betz has also emphasized this same relational quality in interpreting Matthew's version. These three lines are prayers to God for God. They pray for something which God needs. First, God's name needs to be kept holy. Betz states that the intransitive, passive imperative indicates that God must be asked to keep his name holy. It is believed that this comes from the Jewish prayer--the Kaddish (mentioned earlier). Man is not excluded in this action, for God is asked to make man sanctify God's name. In other words, "God, make us sanctify your name." By sanctifying God's name, man is being obedient. For these early Jewish-Christians, obedience was still mainly to the Torah. God gave the Torah to man, so in a sense God is sanctifying man again, emphasizing the faith relationship of the two.

³⁷*Ibid.*

V. 10a 'May thy Kingdom come'

This concept is found both in Jewish and Christian thought. The Kaddish offers the petition: "May he establish his Kingdom during your life and during your days and during the life of all the house of Israel." Jesus would pray this when he announced the Kingdom; therefore, many scholars believe this petition for "thy Kingdom come" bears an undoubtedly eschatological imprint. Did not Jesus begin his ministry with the words: "the time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel"? (Mark 1:15.) The relationship between the name of God and his Kingdom seems to be closely existentially connected. In God's name is his nature, so when he expresses himself on earth his very name is involved. "It is his name, hallowed and holy, which makes the expected Kingdom 'His' Kingdom."³⁸

Gerhard Ebeling in three sermons on the Kingdom also emphasizes this petition's eschatological character. Prayer is turning to God, which is a turning to the future. "Each petition of the Our Father is such a cry for a future, a crying out for God's future because there threatens to be no future for man."³⁹ But why keep praying for the coming of God's Kingdom; isn't it here already? Again Ebeling writes, "As long as I understand the Kingdom of God to be a welcome continuation of this life and this world beyond the point at

³⁸Laymon, *op. cit.*, p. 94.

³⁹Gerhard Ebeling, *On Prayer* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), p. 62.

which they come to an end, at all events in their present form; as long as the infinite continuation of time--my time!--is what I mean by the future with which the second petition deals; as long as I confuse the Kingdom of God itself with my conception of its 'results'; and as long as 'changed conditions' and God's sovereignty over 'others' seem to me more important than his rule over 'myself'--then this prayer for the coming of God's Kingdom is blasphemy."⁴⁰ Ebeling apparently intends to use "Kingdom" as a generic term to describe the basic conditions of one's existence. This is similar to what Bultmann terms authentic and inauthentic existence. Therefore, the Christian has already started participating in the kingdom of God by his act of obedient faith. God as the sovereign Lord of the universe cannot be ultimately escaped (second and third petitions). Although man can reject the divine will of God, God has the last word in the "eschaton," whether in the existential movement or the pending future.

V. 10b 'May thy will come to pass
c as in heaven so also on earth';

Dibelius has tried to show that the third petition is derived from the Gethsemane story. However, since a large section of this story is legend, it is unlikely that this is the case. In addition, this petition is not found in Luke or the Kaddish (although in the first petition of the Kaddish there exists the phrase . . . "according to his will"). What then is the meaning of this petition? Bultmann

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 63-64.

believes that the Kingdom of God which Jesus taught men to pray about means the reign of God on earth. "Satan's sway is to end; God's will shall be done."⁴¹ However, doing the will of God within man's own limits of ability will not bring in the Kingdom. It is a gift of God who must make it real. Therefore, man continues to pray to God: "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." It is a movement towards freedom: "Thy will be done in the world." Ebeling asserts in his three-point sermon that, (1) "Without question everything that happens is an event of God's will, (2) the revealed will of God takes place as clear, luminous word, and (3) we can face the events of the world in the freedom which grows out of assurance."⁴² Therefore to pray for God's will is to grow in a trust relationship with God, that God's will become man's will.

Man's Needs

V. 11 'Our bread for the morrow give us today.'

This second cycle of petition deals with three basic human needs which God does not have. The first is the need for bread. Matthew and Luke are almost identical in their meaning. The *Theological Dictionary* reads, "bread which we need, give us today."⁴³ This probably was meant the way it was. Bultmann's *Theology of the New Testament*

⁴¹Rudolph Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* (New York: Harper & Row, 1960), p. 4ff.

⁴²Ebeling, *op. cit.*, pp. 81-82.

⁴³Betz, *op. cit.*

reads "Bread for morrow, give us today."⁴⁴ This may be possible, yet Dr. Betz finds this difficult to understand. There are several schools of thought concerning the major thrust and emphasis of this verse. Some believe, as Dr. Betz, that this bread is real bread representing real, not eschatological or symbolic needs.⁴⁵ Other scholars such as Jeremias, believe this verse to be eschatological in nature. Still others, as Simpson, believe this bread to be eucharistic. Bread probably did represent real needs of food for the early Christian community. However, other schools of interpretation are important for a wholistic understanding of these passages.

The Greek word used for bread, ἐπιούσιον, lends itself to different interpretation. It could mean bread of tomorrow, bread which we need, or daily bread. Jeremias quotes Jerome (c. A.D. 342-420) who describes that in the [lost] Aramaic *Gospel of the Nazarenes* the term "mehar" appears, meaning tomorrow, and that here therefore the reference was to the bread 'for tomorrow.'⁴⁶ Jeremias believes that "these holy words that the Aramaic-speaking Jewish-Christians, among whom the Lord's Prayer lived on in its original Aramaic wording in unbroken usage since the days Jesus prayed, 'Our bread for tomorrow give us today.'"⁴⁷ Jeremias states that we know from ancient translations (East/West) of the Lord's Prayer, that in the early church this eschatological understanding--"bread of the age of salvation,"

⁴⁴*Ibid.*

⁴⁵*Ibid.*

⁴⁶Jeremias, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*

"bread of life," "heavenly manna"---was familiar.⁴⁸ Whereas, Charles Laymon in his book, *The Lord's Prayer in Its Biblical Setting*, agrees with Dr. Betz' interpretation, that daily bread brings man his basic physical needs; man requires bread, even though he does not live by bread alone. (Deut. 8:3.)⁴⁹ Jesus was concerned with man's physical needs. Jesus was not an ascetic, in contrast with John the Baptist; they even called Jesus a glutton and a drunkard (Matt. 11:19) because he had an affirming attitude toward life.

There are still other interpretations. Some want to assert a moral character of Jesus' sermon for the care for the poor. Other scholars stress the group aspect of the prayer. Each uses the words "us" and "our." These are sometimes referred to as the eschatological community who one day will eat bread at Christ's table in the Kingdom that is to come.⁵⁰ In his book, *The Interpretation of Prayer in the Early Church*, Robert Simpson observes the eucharistic understanding of the fourth petition:

Further, the Lord's Prayer belonged to the liturgy of the Eucharist . . . The Antiochene tradition does not offer a sufficient explanation, for Cyril of Jerusalem does view 'bread' as a Eucharistic allusion: 'This common bread is not substantial (epiousios) bread, but this Holy Bread is substantial, that is, appointed for the substance (ousia) of the soul.⁵¹

⁴⁸*Ibid.*

⁴⁹Laymon, *op. cit.*, p. 125.

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, p. 118.

⁵¹Simpson, *op. cit.*, pp. 59-60.

Still the interpretations arise, and still scholars debate and defend their theories and interpretations.

- V. 12a 'And forgive us our debts,
b as we also have forgiven our debtors.'

This language is Jewish and occurs in the Prayer of eighteen petitions in Jewish religion. Dr. Betz' interpretation of this passage shows Luke to be more to the point when he says "sin." Man's needs arise from Man's need to face Judgement of his sins. This forgiveness is granted every time anew by God's assurance. Because of sinfulness, men are obligated to each other, which is a typical understanding of Jesus. Man has to practice forgiveness in order to be forgiven. Jeremias translates, "as we whereby also forgive our debtors." Dr. Betz believes that perhaps Jeremias is correct in his interpretation. At the moment when we ask for God's forgiveness, we would forgive our debtors. If this occurs at the same time, man gets out of the work righteousness ethic.⁵² Matthew's use of "debts" is probably most Hebraic because a sin was considered a debt owed to God among the Jews.⁵³ These theological explanations are implicit with these verses. "In the *Manual of Discipline* the Dead Sea covenanters are called upon to extend forgiveness 'within the brotherhood.'"⁵⁴ Therefore, forgiveness is a responsibility of man's and an act of grace on God's part.

⁵²Betz, *op. cit.*

⁵³Laymon, *op. cit.*, p. 125.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, p. 127.

- V. 13a 'And do not lead us into temptation
- b but deliver us from evil (or, the evil one)
- c (the doxology) because thine is the Kingdom
 and the power and the glory forever.'

This third need of man is not to be led into temptation (Luke) and to be rescued from evil (Matthew). It is difficult to say which is more original; however, the form critical method shows Matthew to be later for it is longer. Jeremias again wants the verse to be eschatological although Dieter Betz doubts the validity of this interpretation. The theory is that God is the one who leads man into temptation (Gen. 22:1-19). Either God is leading man or is using Satan to lead man into temptation. Evil could be readily substituted by Satan in this context. The Christian constantly struggles with temptation, so this petition is needed; however, this petition is also most problematical for it suggests that God tempts men. Some schools of thought believe that temptation comes from the outside, others believe that temptation comes from within man, still others believe temptation comes from God. There have been few scholars who have solved these arguments.

' . . . because thine is the Kingdom and the power and the glory forever.'

The Doxology is missing in Luke, and is only found in later manuscripts of Matthew. This Jewish-Christian insertion is thoroughly discussed by W. D. Davies. However, it is important to consider the Doxology as part of the Lord's Prayer, for its harmony is with Biblical thought and the teachings of Jesus. The *Didache* contains:

"Thine is the power and the glory."⁵⁵ Above all, it is liturgical in nature. By using this doxology, man is at the most profound roots of his Hebraic-Christian religion.

V. 14 'For if you forgive men their transgressions
Your Father in Heaven will forgive also you;

V. 15 'But if you do not forgive men their trespasses,
Neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.'

Vs. 14 and 15 are formulations of early Jewish-Christian sacred law. These verses are carefully formed and are connected with the catch-word "to forgive." The teachings of Jesus had led these early congregations into congregational law. These verses stress that forgiving or not forgiving has its consequences (at least at Judgment). In summary, the Lord's Prayer of Matthew begins with verses 7 and 8 being theological instruction; 7a being the rejection of pagan prayer practice and 7b being a statement of pagan theology. Verse 8a is an appeal to Christians, whereas, 8b is the Christian theory of prayer. Verses 9-13 are cultic instruction with the prototype of every Christian prayer (which can then be varied). Finally, verses 14 and 15 are formulations of early Jewish-Christians sacred law.⁵⁶ The Lord's Prayer can be used by anybody, anywhere. It has a universal spirit. Our Judaic and Christian tradition has used the Lord's Prayer in catechetical lectures, essays, treatises, Gospel commentaries and homilies. More importantly, the Lord's Prayer witnesses to the nature of

⁵⁵ Betz, *op. cit.*

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

Christian praying, and should therefore be treated as "scriptural and rational" to quote John Wesley's *Orders of Common Prayer of 1784*.

There is no apparent contradiction between a Whiteheadian metaphysic and the Lord's Prayer; however, what is the similarity? There are several obvious observations. God's needs are man's needs. The two are integrally related in man's experience. God's need for his name to be sanctified is met by man's being obedient. Man's obedience is ultimately to the "intimate involvement in the thrust of the universe toward harmony." Man is dependent upon God for God's kingdom to come upon earth *into* man's experience. God's Kingdom, which is the assertion of his love and power, presses upon man's experience at every moment. Whitehead writes in *Process and Reality*: "For the perfected actuality passes back into the temporal world, and qualifies this world so that each temporal actuality includes it as an immediate fact or relevant experience. For the kingdom of Heaven is with us today."⁵⁷ God's kingdom is, therefore, a symbol for the fulfillment of love in all things.

Man's needs are also being met by God. Man needs to be forgiven from sin. Sin as in a Whiteheadian concept means man's thwarting of God's initial aim. Therefore, grace is not only allowing man to seek the ideal possibility of each occasion of experience, but accepting man's thwarted responses and granting more ideal possibilities. This interplay is the experience of praying. Furthermore, man does

⁵⁷Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, p. 532.

not ask God not to allow evil; rather man asks God not to lead him into temptation (i.e. evil). God can do no other in Whiteheadian metaphysics, because God's aim is at the "harmonious intensity of beauty." The primary thrust of the Lord's Prayer is to affirm God's consequent nature. God seeks in his experience of the world to be so integrally related that man's needs *are* God's needs. Man's mutual endeavor to appropriate God's ideal possibility toward beauty relates man and God so that they become co-workers for the Kingdom of Heaven.

CHAPTER III

APPLICATION OF DIALOGUE PRAYER

"If prayer changes anything, it changes the person who prays."

---James White

Dialogue prayer, to repeat an earlier statement, does not replace traditional prayer forms; it is meant to supplement existing forms. This chapter is not one of those self-help programs which one feels guilty about not doing. Hopefully, one may turn to this chapter and do these dialogues when needed. This presentation is the product of much experimentation in methods of evoking the fullest potential of the human personality. The goal is neither religious soul-searching nor a psychological workbook, but an active method of self integration. The dialogue is a way of finding direct contact with the core of one's life. By intense focusing either within a group context or privately, these dialogues bring about a breakthrough in awareness and a recognition of the God who is within us--that "intimate insider" who is co-habitor with man.

The dialogue can be done in many ways ranging (in this author's experience) from least to most productive. One can simply sit by himself and think or imagine the dialogue. Or, he might write his dialogues in a journal. Thirdly, a person may tape record his verbal dialogues, then listen and take notes in his journal on what he avoids, where he integrates, etc. Most effectively, one can dialogue in the presence of another person or a group (never more than ten sensitive people) and allow the group to clarify and probe deeper, but never interpret. Later, through recording one's group experience, important growth producing sections of dialogue can be written into one's journal.

The best way to dialogue is simply to do it. The introduction in each section to follow is to provide reasons why that dialogue is

important. Sometimes it explains "how" to do the exercise, as is the case with the first three sections. Other times, as in the six sections of the Lord's Prayer, the introduction only provides some traditional understanding which helps illuminate the nature and function of the prayer. Hopefully, the background information enables one to better know where to begin to dialogue. The last two sections try to broaden the scope of the chapter in order that a greater breadth and depth of our needs may be covered.

Fritz Perls' book *Gestalt Therapy Verbatim* and his autobiography *In and Out of the Garbage Pail* provide the best illustrations of how the dialogue is used both in group therapy and in one's own personal life. This chapter extends that therapeutic technique into the religious dimensions of one's life, in hopes that the same healing process of integration--the re-owning of projected, fragmented personality parts--may take place. Only one's personal dialogue and his reflections on it, however, will bring about wholeness and growth. Unless these sections help motivate one to dialogue, they are useless and just another individual's experiment in prayer.

LEARNING TO DIALOGUE

Dialogue is a projection identification technique. One becomes able to be in touch with his unconscious and repressed dominant needs and helps himself regain his self-regulating function. This therapeutic principle implies "that it is not necessary deliberately to schedule, to encourage, or inhibit the promptings of appetite,

sexuality, and so forth, in the interests of health or morals."¹ In other words, if things are let be, they will spontaneously regulate themselves, and if they are deranged, they will tend to right themselves. This is not nihilism, it is letting God's purpose and will work in and through man. It is nothing but the advice of the Tao, "stand out of the way." Or as Perls has often said, "Don't push the river, it flows by itself."

Dialoguing allows oneself to love. This is a step toward freedom, since it is by loving that the personality becomes transparent. This development of love in a person, however, is a matter of practice and training. Developing love is a behavior which can be taught. Being taught something involves "conversation" in the sense that man converses with the skill that he wants to develop. Conversation in loving is the conversation of the heart. It is a "sounding out" from the deep in oneself.

The use of the term "dialogue" here is similar to Martin Buber's use of it; in genuine dialogue, resolution and reconciliation become possible. Dialoguing applies whether the words are spoken aloud or whether they are merely thought, i.e. subvocal speech. A small child is taught to speak aloud first and then later puts this acquired language to private use in his thinking. In the integrated personality thinking is an integral part of living. Many people feel that thinking is independent and prior to speech. If there is nothing

¹Frederick Perls, Ralph E. Hefferline, Paul Goodman, *Gestalt Therapy* (New York: Dell, 1951), p. 247.

to fear, speech and thought are often identical. Therefore, to better integrate man's verbal and thinking existence, he must learn to become aware of it.

Speech is good contact when it draws energy from and makes a structure of the three grammatical persons, I, Thou, and It; the speaker, the one spoken to, and the matter spoken about; when there is a need--to communicate--something.²

Gestalt Therapy, a book by Perls, Hefferline, and Goodman, is helpful in understanding the dynamics of speech. In chapter seven, "Verbalizing and Poetry," they write:

As properties of the flow of speech these three persons are (1) the style and especially the rhythm, animation, and climax, expressing the organic need of the speaker; (2) the rhetorical attitude effective in the interpersonal situation (e.g., wooing, denouncing, teaching, bullying); (3) The content, or truth to the impersonal objects spoken about.

Again, especially as the contact of organism and environment becomes closer, the following powers interact:

1. The sounding speech--the physical exercise of uttering and hearing.
2. Thought--the filling out with content of various skeletal organizations.
3. Subvocal speech--repeated unfinished verbal situations.
4. Pre-personal social communication (e.g., outcries) and silent awareness (images, body-feeling, etc.)³

In speech of good contact, these levels cohere in the present actuality.

The thought is directed to efficient orientation and manipulation; the present situation is taken as an adequate possible field for solving an unfinished situation; the social animal is expressing itself; the physical exercise initiates the flow as a fore-pleasure and makes the whole environmental reality.⁴

In other words, the psychological levels of speaking, thought, subvocal speech, and outcries and silent awareness, are all working elements in the process of the dialogue. This implies that one dialogue can either

²*Ibid.*, p. 322.

³*Ibid.*

⁴*Ibid.*

be imagined, written, or spoken depending on its level.

Perls uses this projection technique in his workshops. The following is a brief description of the "dialogue game" used in Gestalt therapy. "In trying to effect integrated functioning the Gestalt therapist works out whatever divisions or splits are manifested in the personality."⁵ Usually, the therapist's own frame of reference decides whatever "split" is found. However, one of the major divisions postulated is that between "top-dog" (usually the internalized parent or superego) and "under-dog" (the superego's polar opposite). "Top-dog" moralizes, specializes in "shoulds" and is generally bossy and condemning. "Under-dog" tends to be passively resistant, makes excuses, and finds reason to delay.⁶ It goes something like this:

The topdog usually is righteous and authoritarian; he knows best. He is sometimes right, but always righteous. The topdog is a bully, and works with 'You should' and 'You should not.' The topdog manipulates with demands and threats of catastrophe, such as, 'If you don't, then--you won't be loved, you won't get to heaven, you will die,' and so on.

The underdog manipulates with being defensive, apologetic, wheedling, playing the crybaby, and such. The underdog has no power. The underdog is the Mickey Mouse. The topdog is the Super Mouse. And the underdog works like this: 'Manana.' 'I try my best.' 'Look, I try again and again; I can't help it if I fail.' 'I can't help it if I forgot your birthday.' 'I have such good intentions.' So you see the underdog is cunning, and usually gets the better of the topdog because the underdog is not as primitive as the topdog. So the topdog and underdog strive for control. Like every parent and child, they strive with each other for control. The person is fragmented into controller and

⁵Joen Fagen, John and Irma Shephard, *Gestalt Therapy Now* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), p. 145.

⁶*Ibid.*

controlled. This inner conflict, the struggle between the topdog and the underdog, is never complete, because topdog as well as underdog fight for their lives.⁷

When this division is encountered, the patient is asked to have an actual dialogue between the two components of himself. The game is described below:

The same game of dialogue can, of course, be pursued for any significant split within the personality (aggressive versus passive, 'nice' guy versus scoundrel, masculine versus feminine, etc.). At times the dialogue game can even be applied with various body parts such as right hand versus left, or upper body versus lower. The dialogue can also be developed between the patient and some significant person. The patient addresses the person as if he were there, imagines the response, replies to the response, etc.⁸

Since awareness is an experience of the on-going organism environment, this transaction is in the present, and includes both thinking and feeling.

DIALOGUE WITH IMAGES

Ira Progoff considers himself to be a "holistic depth psychologist." As such, he holds an organismic view of man, i.e., the belief that the "basic life stuff" (protoplasm) is essentially a system moving towards goals. This protoplasmic system develops mind and consciousness as essential aspects of its life growth. Therefore, Progoff derives the majority of his foundational thought from men like Edmund Sinnott, Tillich, Buber, Toynbee, Mumford, Sovokin and Jung. Sinnott

⁷Frederick Perls, *Gestalt Therapy Verbatim* (Lafayette, CA.: Real People Press, 1961), p. 18.

⁸Fagen and Shephard, *op. cit.*

in two books, *The Biology of the Spirit* (1955) and *Matter, Mind and Man* crystallizes protoplasm "as possessing a pattern which so regulates the course of the changes that go on within it that a specific form or activity tends to result."⁹ Therefore, the psyche is defined as the "directing principle" in an individual that sets the pattern of growth and works to sustain it throughout the life of the organism. As such, this "organic" psyche functions in terms of its own inherent processes. Man's life displays consciousness, yet its roots are unconscious. Therefore, an interpretation of the human personality is not to be cast either as a cerebral act, nor as an unconscious act. The holistic view of the organic psyche provides man with meanings for his life. These meanings supplied by the organic psyche are, in essence, the image-making faculty of the psyche. As such, they are products of the imagination which arise in "symbolic forms."

This symbolic style of the psyche requires no translation. It can be felt directly in its own terms. The symbol appears as a spontaneous image "which emerges from the depth of the personality and acts as a vehicle by which the latent in the unconscious of the individual can be carried forward."¹⁰ The image provides the motivation force by which this potentiality can unfold and become actual in the world. Therefore, the psyche is perceived as images. The form of these images may be visual, coming as pictures; they may be auditory,

⁹ Ira Progoff, *Depth Psychology and Modern Man* (New York: Julian, 1969), p. 116.

¹⁰ Ira Progoff, *Symbolic and Real* (New York: Julian, 1963), p. 23.

coming as words, or sounds, or music; they may be olfactory, coming as smells that carry the scent of what is sought; and very often these images express themselves, strongly but elusively in the more generalized terms of intuitive feeling.¹¹ This flow of imagery may force itself to the forefront of awareness in dreams, fantasies and reveries, as well as in conscious thinking. This flow of imagery is moving forward within man under their own momentum, undirected, and in a steady flow. The psyche, as "imagery in flow" is therefore always moving about, enlarging, relating, transforming, and symbolizing itself.

The key to the symbolic style of the psyche is its quality of "dramatization." Ideas¹² (images) and feelings are personified. This directive principle of "dramatization," implicit in its images, has the effect of opening in man a sensitivity to meaningfulness not only in his personal life but in the universe around him. "This quality of awareness expresses man's need to experience the meeting of the finite and the infinite within himself. The awareness of purpose and the recognition of it in the life process has the effect of transcending individuality."¹³ The depth psychologist wants to draw the process

¹¹*Ibid.*, p. 82.

¹²Sinnott writes, "the protoplasmic pattern immanent in the egg or in any cell, to which the various stages in development and finally the structure of the mature individual will conform, is the prototype of a purpose, and finally an idea, that is immanent in the cells of the brain." (*Depth Psychology for Modern Man*, p. 124.) This is not incongruent with the thought of Whitehead's initial aim.

¹³Progoff, *Symbolic and Real*, p. 82.

of the psyche forward so that "more of its imagery, more of its implicit purpose becomes available for the wholeness of the person's life in the world."¹⁴ Progoff wants to develop an inward perspective of this intuitive sense and familiarity which is taking place at the depth of the psyche. Furthermore, man needs to develop a sensitivity to the symbolic style in which the movements in the psyche are expressed. Therefore, for Progoff, the alternative to the analytical way in psychotherapy is to work to stimulate the depth of the psyche "until it brings forth symbol contents that make possible a vital new experience of meaning in the individual's life."¹⁵ This understanding correlates with the Gestalt principle of self-regulation. Twilight Imaging has the effect of loosening and stimulating the flow of the nonconscious level of the personality.

When the proper rapport is established as the base for twilight imaging, it is like having a deep dream where the elusive contents are not forgotten or lost. They are recorded in the moment they occur. Since the flow of imagery goes on continuously in the psyche, twilight imaging can be employed in most any moment of man's experience. In imaging, one relaxes, closes his eyes, and observes and describes the flow of imagery that moves in one's head. This flow is kaleidoscopic, simply moving or presenting itself in one form or another. It moves with no apparent cohering principle, until a pattern is formed by the

¹⁴Progoff, *Depth Psychology and Modern Man*, p. 247.

¹⁵Progoff, *Symbolic and Real*, p. 143.

formless flow of the imagery itself. Often the images seem to refer to specific persons and events of recent contacts. Often these images are nothing more than recalls of environmental contact; however, some images may hold a special significance. If an attitude of openness and sensitivity is held, the imagery flow will reveal (if it is not merely environmental) a pattern of growth that may be characteristic of the person's life as a whole.¹⁶

DIALOGUE WITH DREAMS

Man's dreaming is a condensed reflection of his existence. It is an existential message, though coded in cryptic language. If it was a straight-forward message, one would not need to dream it. Most people live in a world of their own prejudiced perspective (Freud called this a "complex" and Perls calls it the "Middle or Childish Zone"). In one's dreams, it is this Middle Zone which is primarily at work. If self-actualization is being able to move between the zone of the external real world and the inner zone of one's self, and not live in one's middle fantasy zone between the two, then the dream is the key to discovering better ways to grow and actualize the greatest possibility of each moment of life.

The dialogue with dreams differs from the traditional ways of dealing with dreams. In dialogue one does *not* interpret his dreams,

¹⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 92-93.

he integrates. Interpretation is still useful¹⁷ but the dialogue with dreams is a short-cut to any externally imposed interpretations. A person knows more about himself than anyone else can possibly know or interpret. The dream is the most spontaneous expression of one's existence; it comes without man's intention, will, or deliberation. Even the most absurd dream seems real at the time. Dream dialogues help man see that parts of his dreams are fragments of his personality. The aim of the dream dialogue is to unify different fragmented parts of one's personality in order to become a more unified person without conflicts. To do this, "We have to 're-own' these projected, fragmented parts of our personality, and 're-own' the hidden potential that appears in the dream."¹⁸

In the dream dialogue one does not simply "tell" his dream, but becomes those projected parts of his dream. If one can begin to identify those alienated projected parts of oneself which manifest themselves in dreams, then one can assimilate these parts to become more in touch with God's initial aim. This material which has been dissociated, alienated, disowned, thrown out (existing in man's middle or fantasy zone) is available, but only as projection. The projector throws outward his unwanted feelings, but he does not get rid of them.

¹⁷ Such books as Morton Kelsey's *Dreams*, John Sanford's *Dreams--God's Forgotten Language*, Harmon Bro's *Dreams in the Life of Prayer*, many of C. G. Jung's works, especially *Memories, Dreams and Reflections* and Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams* have greatly helped my understanding of dreams.

¹⁸ Perls, *Gestalt Therapy Verbatim*, p. 67.

"The only way actually to get rid of an 'unwanted feeling' is to accept it, express it and thus discharge it."¹⁹ One can reassimilate--take back his projections--by projecting himself completely into that other thing or person. This is the aim of the dialogue, to reintegrate one's disowned projections.

If one projects an incompleteness, and then becomes the projection, he experiences it. "If you're capable of projecting yourself totally into every little bit of the dream--and really 'become' that thing--then you begin to reassimilate, to re-own what you have disowned, given away."²⁰ The more a person disowns, the more impoverished he is because he becomes less of who he is and wants more to be a concept, a fantasy, what he "should" be like. Even though the projection often appears to be something painful, if one is able to take responsibility for it, then things begin to come together. When man takes responsibility for his projections, re-identify with these projections, and become what he projects, growth and healing occur.

In summary, dreams are the most effective means of discovering what parts of a person are disowned or projected. If a person can become (play) all parts of his dream, both persons and objects, then he may be able to assimilate what has been projected. Therefore, a man's dream is a clever existential message of what is missing in his life, what he is avoiding. One will always have plenty of material to re-assimilate and re-own.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, p. 221.

²⁰*Ibid.*, p. 99.

In learning to dialogue with dreams, one must first get a feel for the dream. Talk to dreams, and let dreams talk back--not the content, but as if the dreams were a thing. "Dreams, you are frightening me," "Dreams I cannot remember you," "Dreams, I don't want to know about you," anything, and then let the dreams answer back.

Next, play the role of your dreams, i.e., how you experience your dreams. Be your dream. Reverse the role, so that as you dream you can talk to the group as if you were the dream talking to yourself.

After following these exercises, one may notice how the dream symbolizes much of who he is. The following are helpful techniques to receive the most out of one's dialogues. If a person understands what he can do with his dreams, a tremendous amount of integration may occur. As long as a dream can be remembered, no matter how fragmented or old, it is still alive and available, and it still contains an unfinished, unassimilated situation. In working with dreams, only the smallest fragment is needed.

After waking from a dream, write down the dream and make a list of all details in it. The sooner the dream is written down, the more one will remember. Telling yourself, just before sleep, that you *will* remember your dreams is helpful. It also helps to keep a pencil and pad beside the bed. Upon waking with an unfinished dream, going back to sleep for thirty to forty-five minutes may provide additional information. Writing down the dream in a journal also helps to parallel the dream with the previous day's events, moods, feelings, and correlations are many times discovered later. Try to capture every person,

every thing, every mood, and then work to "become" each of them. Transform yourself into each of these with your gift of imagination. Ham it up! Become it! Whatever is in the dream, the possibility of becoming it is there. It doesn't help to think. In fact, it may hurt one's ability to transform himself. Tell the dream in the present tense and always the first person--"I am . . ." Describing the object often helps. "I have," or "I am . . ."--never use the impersonal "it." Using "it" keeps one from taking responsibility for ownership.

Next, take each one of these different items, characters, parts, and write a script. Let them have encounters. By writing a script, one dialogues. The dialogue is between the two opposing parts and if one chooses the correct opposites, they always start fighting each other. "All the different parts--any part in the dream is yourself, is a projection of yourself, and if there are inconsistent sides, contradictory sides, and you use them to fight each other, you have the eternal conflict game, the self-torture game."²¹ "As the process of encounter goes on, there is a mutual learning until we come to an understanding, and an appreciation of differences, until we come to a oneness and integration of the two opposing forces."²² The more difficulty one has in distinguishing between these opposing forces, the closer one is to integration.

Each bit of work means a bit of assimilation of some alienated fragment of one's personality. If one was able to work with every

²¹*Ibid.*, p. 69.

²²*Ibid.*

single thing in one dream, he would be tremendously more self-actualized. In each different form, the dreams change. When one works on his dreams in this manner, more dreams come with clearer existential messages. The missing part of the personality begins to reveal itself if this work is continued. Therefore, the dream is an excellent opportunity to find the holes in a person's personality. The holes come out as voids, as blank spaces, and when one gets into the vicinity of these holes, he becomes confused or nervous and starts avoiding.

One avoids his own alienation. Integration requires full identification, and identification is the counteraction to the alienation. Alienation is experienced as "that's not me, that's something else, something strange, something not belonging to me."²³ One does not want to re-own, or take back, those parts of oneself which have been pushed out of his personality. Perls, in describing avoidance writes:

There is a dreadful experience, the expectation, 'If I approach this, there will be catastrophe. I will be nothing.' I have already talked a bit about the philosophy of nothingness. This is the impasse, where you avoid, where you become phobic. You suddenly get sleepy or remember something very important you have to do. So if you work on dreams it is better if you do it with someone else who can point out where you avoid. Understanding the dream means realizing when you are avoiding the obvious. The only danger is that this other person might come too quickly to the rescue and tell you what is going on in you, instead of giving yourself the chance of discovering yourself.²⁴

If someone is able to discover what he is avoiding, he has a shortcut in working with his dreams. Many times one avoids by

²³*Ibid.*, p. 121.

²⁴*Ibid.*, p. 70.

interrupting the dream and waking up rather than continuing it. Often one is avoiding death, being killed, or sex. Avoidance and unfinished business are core concepts in Gestalt therapy.

Unfinished business includes emotions, events, memories, which linger unexpressed in the organismic person; avoidance is the means by which one keeps away from the unfinished business. By avoidance the person tries to escape from feelings that must be felt in order to release him into his own custody.²⁵

Each person if he is to integrate these holes into his personality must take responsibility for whatever he is. Perls in his therapy patiently requires his patients to say, "I don't want to" rather than "I can't." He teaches his patient to do what the patient wants with every moment of his life rather than hiding behind "catastrophic expectations"--the fear of what will happen if he accepts whatever he really is and feels.²⁶

In other words, if a person does not remember any dreams, he does not want to face his existence. They also probably avoid coping with unpleasantness. This is the reason that a group or another person is needed. This third party's function is to help the person discover what he is avoiding, not to give interpretations. If one translates an it into an I, he increases his vitality and potential. The goal of the dream dialogue is to change every "noun" and "it" into an "I." "Don't torture yourself with these demands, but realize this is the basis of our existence and discover that this is how it is. It is how it should be and it should be how it is."²⁷

²⁵Perls, *Gestalt Therapy*, p. 136.

²⁶*Ibid.*

²⁷Perls, *Gestalt Therapy Verbatim*, p. 71.

DIALOGUE WITH THE PETITIONS OF THE LORD'S PRAYER

In the following six sections the Lord's Prayer is employed as the model of Christian prayer and therefore the structure of dialogue prayer. It may be helpful to summarize that theory of Christian prayer in order to enhance these sections on the Lord's Prayer.

Why should man pray at all? The answer is found in the reinterpretation by the early Christians of the concept of need, shown in this cultic example of the Lord's Prayer. It states two fundamental needs--the need of God, and the most fundamental needs of man. Man's needs are the needs of God--his name be sanctified, his Kingdom come, his will be done. If these needs of God are taken care of, so are man's most urgent needs. But the fact is that God's needs are not taken care of, so prayer is in order. Ultimately, only God can take care of God's needs, but man prays for God to handle His (God's) own needs. By doing this, man confesses that his (man's) needs are God's needs and that man is dependent upon God. However, vs. 11, 12, 13 present three fundamental needs of man which are not God's--the need for food, the need for forgiveness, and the need for protection against temptation. These needs are being met by God daily (normally) although it may not always be self-evident. Dieter Betz can find no parallel to this theory of prayer, so it may have the possibility of being a distinctive Christian theory of prayer.

Briefly understood, man is asked to sanctify God's name by being obedient. Man asks God to make his Kingdom break into *this* world. And thirdly, that God's will be done in Heaven, also upon

earth. In the second cycle of the petition, man needs daily bread (food). Man needs to be forgiven for sin which is not once and for all, but granted every time anew by God. God is asked not to lead (rather than allow) man into temptation (or evil=satan=power of evil).

The following six petitions of the Lord's Prayer can each be dialogued within exactly the same way and style as was done with the past dialogues of Top-dog vs. Under-dog, dialogue with images, and dialogue with dreams. Dialogue as a psychotherapeutic technique in counseling has shown itself to work. It has been tried, tested, and proven; but will dialoguing with the real yet often abstract petitions of the Lord's Prayer work? After four intensive workshops in the Claremont Presbyterian Church with a group of seven laymen and women over a period of one month, and with various other situations and groups dialoguing with each petition of the Lord's Prayer has demonstrated itself to work. In learning to dialogue, these lay people have enriched not only their prayer life, but have integrated many fragments of their personality (especially in the spiritual dimension of their existence). Although these experiences with lay people cannot be generalized to include all laymen, this author has found everyone contacted thus far to be able to dialogue and consequently be able to dialogue with each Lord's Prayer petition. This includes high school young people as well as the elderly. To experience the healing and integrating effects of this style of praying, one is simply asked to do it in the same manner that he did with the past three dialogues. The following dialogues are:

Dialogue with God

Dialogue with God's Kingdom

Dialogue with Daily Bread

This is interpreted to mean dialogue with one's body or physical needs which daily bread symbolizes.

Dialogue with Forgiveness

Include both dialogues of one's *own* experience of forgiveness as well as the dialogue of forgiving one's neighbor.

Dialogue with Temptation

Several additional forms of temptation need clarification: one's temptation to avoid his shadow, and his temptation to avoid an impasse and one's temptation to avoid both. As long as one's shadow--his dark side--is ignored, it seems threatening and dangerous. The problem of the shadow has only recently been formulated in psychological language by C. G. Jung, but this side of man's personality is as old as man himself. The Bible contains many examples of the two opposite sides of human nature. As long as one's shadow is unrecognized and not integrated, it will cause frightful destruction. One also avoids his own alienation (as discussed in the section on dreams). Alienation is experienced as "that's not me, that's something else, something strange, something not belonging to me."²⁸ One does not want to re-own, take-back, those parts of himself which have been pushed out of his personality. The two related forms of temptation are very difficult parts of man's personality to integrate, yet there is still another temptation for man--not to let God be God. As stated in an earlier footnote, Whitehead in *Religion in the Making* says that God may be "enemy" before he become friend. In other words, God is ambiguous sometimes, and things may become worse before they become better. "Evil" as well as good may become dominate for a time, and the modern man's temptation is not to be a Job who with radical faith accepts both and all aspects of God.

Dialogue with the Church

Since the doxology was added by the early Christian church, one can interpret this dialogue to be with any desired form or manifestation of the church--ranging from a brick building to an abstract church universal.

²⁸*Ibid.*, p. 121.

DIALOGUE WITH JESUS

Christians often speak of Jesus, the Christ, as the revelation of God or of God revealing himself in Jesus. At the same time, Christians want to say that Jesus reveals what man really is. Jesus is the God/Man. If Jesus is the embodiment of revelation, then a brief discussion of a Whiteheadian Christology may provide some additional insight into prayer. Process theology may offer a framework for bridging the gap between Jesus' transcendence and his humanity. "God's indwelling in Jesus is the chief exemplification of this philosophy's (process) principle of immanence: as Jesus intensified his obedience to the call of God, so, without impairing Jesus' humanity and human freedom, God was supremely, yet objectively, immanent in Jesus."²⁹ Man's experience needs an initial aim or purpose, which must be given to it; but man is free in each moment of experience either to conform to that initial aim or--within the limits of his freedom--to diverge from it. Man, like Jesus, the Christ becomes cooperative with God. Peter Hamilton's statement about Jesus appears to be the major point of convergence for the process theologian's Christology. He writes:

If religion has any meaning, a man's conscious and unconscious relationship with God is a vital aspect of his 'self.' If this aspect differed in kind in the case of Jesus from every member of the species man, then in the present state of our knowledge it would seem impossible rightly to describe Jesus as man.³⁰

²⁹Peter N. Hamilton, "Some Proposals for a Modern Christology," in Delwin Brown, *et al.*, *Process Philosophy and Christian Thought* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1971), p. 371.

³⁰*Ibid.*, p. 373.

Norman Pittenger in *The Word Incarnate* also uses process categories to affirm Jesus' divinity without contradicting his full humanity when he writes: "Jesus is that One in whom God actualized in a living human personality the potential God-man relationship which is the divinely intended truth about *everyman* Thus the incarnation of God in Christ is the focal point of the divine action vis-a-vis humanity."³¹ Jesus' adherence to God's initial aim for him was optimally actualized partly by prayer. In many ways, Jesus is unique; however, this paper is concerned primarily with God as present in *all* actual occasions, and what relationship prayer has to this process. Therefore, three additional speculations concerning the relationship of prayer to Jesus, the Christ, are needed.

First, Jesus, the Christ, is the symbol of mature spiritual growth. The Christ symbol is the central focus in praying. This "focusing" keeps prayer in a state of creative imbalance. Praying undergirds man with the confidence that he is being loved "now" whatever state he may be in. Frank Kimper states, "So, the Christ symbolizes not only 'ideal possibilities for becoming,' but 'the undergirding of the everlasting Arms.' And praying keeps the symbol fresh, alive, and 'in focus.'"³²

Secondly, the Christ as symbol gathers within it all those

³¹Gene Reeves and Delwin Brown, "The Development of Process Theology," in Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

³²Frank Kimper, "Musings About the Dynamics of Prayer," (unpublished class presentation, School of Theology at Claremont, 1971).

values which man holds to be of ultimate concern. Again Dr. Kimper in his very beautiful writing style relates:

For me, as a Christian, the symbol of faith is 'the Christ.' As such it is very personal. It confronts me again and again with those values I sense to be TRUE values, and intensifies in me a felt need to organize my life in terms of them. This intense inner demand is what I experience as the captivating, yet terrifying, call to reach beyond my grasp. Since a symbol cannot be understood apart from one's own personal experience associated with it, 'the Christ' symbol emerges for me from the way I perceive and identify with the historical Jesus within the framework of my own personal history. Thus for me 'the Christ' symbolizes the personal love relationship between God and men (including me), and all the possibilities for creative community living among men and earth. That God's relationship with men *is loving* the reach of faith affirms in me. More personally, my faith in 'the Christ' is an unprovable conviction that God loves me perfectly and unconditionally--that the attitudes and actions of Jesus reveal the way the God who is both Creator and Sustainer of the Universe relates *to me, here and now*.³³

Thirdly, prayer focuses upon the future as well as the now. Jesus, the Christ, as a symbol as well as reality in man's life, has a long tradition. When a Christian prays, he is not only focusing his ideal possibilities and mediating God's love for him in the "now"; he is "participating" in the Christian community--past, present, and future. It is the future aspect of praying to which little attention has been paid. Jesus, the Christ, as "focusing" keeps petitionary prayer from becoming a subtle means of manipulation--asking God to do something either that God doesn't know about or else what God would otherwise fail to do. When a Christian prays, he brings to bear "All those who are yet to come." Prayer acts as a continuum--past, present,

³³ *Ibid.*

and future--which is gathered and kept in the soul of God. Therefore, Jesus the Christ as the central focus in praying, stimulates and directs growth.

By praying man discovers the meaning and purpose of his relationship with all that is. As man probes the depths of his being, he discovers his own inner nature. By praying man enlarges his perspective of both his own nature and his larger more encompassing environment. If God supplies the initial aim for man's experiencing, then process theology may approximate Teilhard de Chardin's concept of biological evolution where God supplies a "lure" to evolution. God's aim also seems to parallel Teilhard's emphasis upon the "aim" or "goal" in the evolutionary process which reveals itself to us in the state of becoming. Therefore, perhaps praying may be a special kind of expectancy--being sensitive and open to God's aim and translating it into awareness as feeling, impulses, insight or whatever.

It is fitting that this section close with a quote from Whitehead himself:

The experience of Peace (what this author calls prayer) is largely beyond the control of purpose.

It comes as a gift. (AI 368)

. . . It is primarily a trust in the efficacy of Beauty.³⁴

It is here that the good finally triumphs and is engulfed by the divine glory.

³⁴ Alfred Whitehead, *Adventures in Ideas* (New York: Macmillan, 1933), p. 367.

DIALOGUE WITH SCRIPTURES

As stated in the first chapter, the authority for speaking of God is fourfold: "*Scriptural* truth *experienced* in life, made intelligible and self-consistent through *reasoning*, and mediated through the historic Christian *tradition*."³⁵ Since Christian faith rests heavily on the Holy Scriptures, it seems fruitful to dialogue with the Scriptures. One can either take a verse, a passage, a parable, a character, a Biblical incident, etc., project it into an empty chair and carry on a conversation.

³⁵Thomas Oden, *Structures of Awareness* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1969), p. 88.

SUMMARY

In the first chapter God was defined in terms of His immanent relationship to man. The nature of God's character in relation to man is that of an "intimate insider" who encourages and lures man to actualize the given possibilities in each moment of his existence. The goal of dialogue prayer is to help one get in touch with this intimate insider and achieve harmony among the many micro-universes which make up man. Dialogue prayer is a regular and disciplined meeting in a structured context, where the pattern and direction of the individual's life can be examined objectively, interpreted, evaluated, and drawn toward each maximum occasion of possibility. The underlying assumption is simply that God is always in relationship with His manifestations. Dialogue prayer is a direct outgrowth of this assumption. In prayer man offers God the opportunity for a greater share in man's finitude.

The second chapter, "A Metaphysical Understanding of Prayer" sought to discover what kind of communication dialogue prayer is. The nature of God was discussed, beginning with a description of the world. Alfred Whitehead's philosophy was used as the conceptual foundation describing how God is an active process in the world. In man, the initial aim of each occasion is derived from God, and is felt by man with some valuation. In the language of process theology, this direct experience of God's relationship to man is called the consequent nature of God. The Christian tradition calls this dimension God's immanence. Dialogue prayer can be understood as one method of

getting in touch with the best possibilities of man's initial aim.

The final section of the second chapter showed how Betz' understanding of the Lord's Prayer corresponds with previous metaphysical speculations. The Lord's Prayer is the Christian theory of prayer and directly opposes pagan theory and practice. The Lord's Prayer is therefore a cultic example of what Christian prayer should be. Modern man puts great effort into trying to realize what his needs are. The Lord's Prayer, however, affirms that God knows man's needs better than man himself. This does not mean that the Lord's Prayer excludes man's needs, but that they are reduced. In the prayer, the most important needs of man are spoken to first; the most obvious needs, however, are mentioned last. The most important needs of man are the needs of God. God's needs are that his name be sanctified, his Kingdom come, his will be fulfilled; if those needs of God are taken care of, so are man's basic needs. Metaphysically, this is understood as God's consequent nature; God is in direct relationship with his works! God's problems are human problems.

Another reason why man should pray is expressed in the Lord's Prayer. Man needs to express his confidence and dependence in this life which enable him to take care of his obvious needs. The three fundamental needs which are not God's are the need for food, forgiveness, and protection against temptation. These needs are being met daily (for the most part) by God's action, although it may not be self-evident. If man begins to solve part of God's problems--his name be hallowed, his Kingdom come, his will done--he becomes more

human and solves his own problems. If the Lord's Prayer pronounces man's fundamental needs, dialogue prayer can be understood as another way of praying for those needs to be met, the method being to turn inward.

Chapter three contained the application of dialogue prayer. Dialoguing allows one to love. The presupposition is that the more integrated one is, the freer he is to love. Dialogue prayer aims at integration. Since integration is also the goal of Gestalt Psychology, much of Fritz Perls' work was employed in this third section of the paper, especially in the dialogue with dreams. If man can re-own the projected fragmented parts of his personality, by accepting and projecting himself completely into some other thing or person, he can reassimilate---take back---these unwanted feelings. This is the aim of dialogue prayer, to re-integrate one's disowned projections. The more a person disowns, the more he becomes less of who he is and wants and more of a concept, a fantasy of what he should be, thus ignoring the unique possibilities inherent in his own initial aim, as well as life itself. The goal of this dissertation was to experiment in discovering a new form of prayer which is metaphysically and scripturally justifiable. Whether it succeeded or not can only be determined by whether one is enabled to dialogue and to what extent his life is more fully integrated.

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APPENDIX

REPORT ON JOHNSON, TEILHARD DE CHARDIN, COBB

---Frank Kimper

Any experience of what I think of as "praying" is concerned to discover the meaning and purpose of my relationship to all that is. To this end, from within my own little perceptual world I probe into the depths of my own being to become aware of my own nature.

But, from within my own little perceptual world I also probe into the vastness of the environment engulfing me, to become aware of the universe of which I am a part. I am particularly sensitive to what are perceived to be the inter-personal aspects of my relationship with all that is, sensing that my destiny is somehow *more intensely* involved in these.

So praying is for me concerned with enlarging and/or correcting my perceptions of both my own nature, and my encompassing environment; but it is also concerned with discovering, choosing and fulfilling *my destiny*, as it is inferred from my perception of both.

Today I want to share with you similar views of a part of the environment in which we participate--the so-called physical world. First, a view presented by Raynor Johnson in his book, *The Imprisoned Splendor*. Raynor Johnson is an Australian physicist who has also made extensive study of psychical phenomena and mystical experience. The focus of his view is on *MIND*, and the seeming necessity for associating all matter with mind.

MIND he perceives as the organizing-unifying aspect of matter in whatever degree of complexity it may exist. It is the purposive-directive aspect of process involved in the evolution of matter from one form or state to another, allowing for novelty, but always maintaining order. Even in the novel there is a sense of continuity in the process. Though MIND in this sense seems to be characteristic of both "non-living" and "living" matter, Johnson points to the "living cell" as an example of the way in which simultaneously, and without interfering with each other, scores of complex processes are in constant flux. He says, "It is a 'living cell' by virtue of the fact that it is always acting and reacting to changes in its environment as though with the purpose of maintaining itself in accord with some basic pattern or design. Its processes of repair and healing are a commentary on this.

It is interesting to observe that specialized cells, such as muscle, nerve and blood cells may be removed from the body and kept alive in a suitable culture medium for years after separation from the organism of which they were originally a part, indicating that a living cell is a self-maintaining system from the point of view of its energy interchange with its environment. But, after much cell division under

these conditions, they lose their specialized character, and revert to a simpler, generalized type of cell. This suggests that their specialized structure and function arose from, and was maintained by, their relation to the greater organism of which they were a part. It is as though the cell had its own simple and generalized life-pattern which, however, was modified and made specialized by the over-arching life-pattern of the organism.

In the adult man there are close to a thousand billion cells. What is it that coordinates the functioning of all these in the interests of the whole? The behavior of a single cell seems to have something of intelligence about it, but when we consider a vast organism, we appear to see intelligence enormously transcending that of the individual cell. The cell, so-to-speak, can have no conception whatever of the total functioning of the larger structure of which it is so small a part, and yet it makes its own significant contribution to the harmonious functioning of the body as a whole. Does this imply Mind? And is it Mind such as we know in ourselves. To what extent are intelligence and purpose operative in all living things, tying every part together in the smooth functioning of the whole?

It is as if an Immanent, All-pervading Purpose inspires each cell with knowledge for the carrying out of a design over-and-beyond that of the individual cell itself. The variety of the chemistry in the cells of various parts of the body, bearing in mind they all come from one cell, is something to ponder. Why should the position in space within the fetus determine whether a cell shall manufacture adrenalin, thyroxin, or play the role of a muscle? One answer is that chemical substances have been isolated from certain parts of the embryo which have been called, "organizers." These appear to have growth-stimulating and growth-controlling properties wherever they are found. All this is another example of the remarkable chemical activity which occurs in the whole process of physical growth from ovum to adult.

But, what organizes the "organizers"? How are these chemical substances produced in the right place, and at the right time, so that the end result is not a chemical monstrosity, but an organically functioning whole? The embryo seems pervaded by some general, invisible plan; but a plan suggests planning; and Mind is the only thing known to us with purpose, memory, intelligence.

The fact of evolution stands out, but it raises many questions: what are the factors which create and sustain process? Why do some species succeed and others fail? And why is the trend at all consistent in that the persistent direction of evolution is toward the creation of organisms of increasing complexity and awareness? Is there goal, and purpose, in evolution? Smuts proposes a concept of "the field of an organism" in which he suggests that the pull of the future is as significant as the push of the past. The organism seems vaguely, or intuitively, to anticipate possibilities for its own future; and,

depending upon its degree of response to such intuition, to conserve and develop those minute variations, or tendencies, which make possible its realization of that future. What Smuts calls, "holistic thrust" acts within each organism in respect to all its parts, putting the resources of the whole behind any promising tendency.

When we try to sum up in familiar terms what is meant by "the field" encompassing minerals, plants, animals and persons, sustaining each in a purposive relation to all the rest, only the word, "MIND" seems appropriate. The ability to profit by mistakes, the experimental method of trial and error, the quality of inventiveness, the ability to formulate goals, and plan for their realization--these characteristics of the evolutionary process are characteristics of MIND as we know it in ourselves.

This suggests the possibility that the whole universe functions as one vast organism, that all of its inter-related parts are pervaded by an ORGANIZING MIND, though each part possesses in varying degrees a mind of its own, and in varying measure--ability, will, and freedom of its own to participate in, and contribute to, the evolution of the whole.

Teilhard de Chardin seems to propose a similar view in his discussion of evolution as *the rise of consciousness*, but goes beyond it in his emphasis upon "aim" or "goal" in the evolutionary process. He says that the stuff of the universe reveals itself to us in a state of becoming.

Always, a richer and better organized structure corresponds to a more developed consciousness, for consciousness and complexity are actually two dimensions of one and the same phenomenon: growth.

The primary process in the gigantic movement of the universe toward higher levels of existence and organization focuses in the development of the mind. At this stage the process might be called, "hominization," or the thrust by virtue of which man is realizing more and more of his possibilities--i.e., becoming more truly human. With increasing intensification of mind this quality of "becoming more human" is evidenced in man's increasing capacity for receiving information of many kinds about events within and without, for synthesizing and processing that information in various organized forms, and for utilizing it to direct present and future action. It is this capacity which has given man a dominant position. And, as a consequence, evolution has seemingly taken on a new character--that of psycho-social process in which both the power of reflection and the facility for language are crucial elements.

In this process of hominization the value of the *individual* member of the species began to increase; a "person" emerged. However, the species did not disintegrate just because it atomized into

individual thinking centers. On the contrary, it was strengthened by the potentiality for cooperative activity.

Because of this the direction in evolution has been moving steadily toward new patterns of cooperation among individuals for new knowledge, enjoyment, and social control; and this process Teilhard de Chardin has called "Personalization." He distinguishes clearly between man as an individual, and man as a person, and emphasizes that the attainment of the status of "person" is the evolutionary trend. Persons are men who are able to transcend their mere organic individuality in favor of extensive inter-relations and cooperation, and the process of personalization is the incipient development of mankind in the direction of a single psycho-social unit with a common pool of thought.

Love is the critical ingredient in this, along with knowledge, since love is the organizing principle which allows knowledge to express itself in meaningful ways: not, of course, the sentimental face of love, but love as the natural affinity of being with being. The internal propensity to unite is obvious on every level--even in the molecule; were this not so, it would be impossible for any unity among men in socialized forms. So, as love propels us toward inter-thinking humanity, a new type of organism will emerge, according to Chardin, in the form of a community of persons, whose destiny is to become the equivalent of "a person," making possible the global unity of many minds while maintaining a high degree of variety within that unity.

For him, though man is not the center of the universe, he has emerged as the newest hope for a higher expression of unity--the inter-dependent harmony of autonomous beings. Man, he says, holds in his own hands the freedom to attune himself to the evolutionary thrust, or to oppose it; and this is decisive since he is, therefore, responsible for his own future.

As we have seen, both Johnson and Teilhard de Chardin focus attention upon MIND as an Organizing Principle pervading all the inter-related parts of the universe so that the universe functions as one vast organism involved in seemingly purposeful evolution. Both also recognize that each part seems to possess in varying measure a mind of its own, and in varying degrees the freedom to choose HOW it will participate in the economy of the whole. Johnson suggests that each entity seems vaguely or intuitively to anticipate the possibilities for its own future; and depending upon its degree of response to such intuition, to conserve and develop those minute variations, or tendencies, which make possible its realization of that future.

And Teilhard de Chardin suggests that with the intensification of mind human beings emerge with increasing capacity for receiving information of many kinds about events without and within, for synthesizing and processing that information in various organized forms, and for utilizing it to direct present and future action. In this context

questions about the nature of the inter-play between All-pervasive Mind and personalized human mind are the focus of our interest here. How does each function in their interplay one with the other? In at least some of its dimensions the answers to that question represent the goal of our search for an understanding of the dynamics of prayer. And I propose now to turn to Whitehead and Cobb for a beginning approach to this search.

First let me indicate that what Johnson is content to refer to as All-pervasive Mind Whitehead in his early writing called "Underlying substantial activity," and later "creativity," then finally "actual entity," since he argued, "Only actual entities can act to effect change or exert an influence toward a particular goal." And Cobb concludes that in its functioning that "special entity" can be understood best as a "living person." I do not want to get side-tracked at this moment into a discussion of semantics, but to recognize that all of these descriptive phrases are subsumed under the word, "God," by each of these men; and turn back to the question posed earlier, "What is the nature of the interplay between All-pervasive Mind and personalized human mind?" a reflective aspect of which may be thought of as "praying."

Says Cobb: God envisages the possibilities in every occasion of experience, and also the ideal possibility, given that particular situation. This set of possibilities emerges as the alternatives from among which the final satisfaction of that occasion will be chosen. These are all bounded by the definite limits required for the maintenance of minimal order in the universe.

Given a particular occasion, and one's own unique experience in all past occasions of experience, only a limited number of possibilities seem to promise satisfaction, and these in varying degrees. The question to be answered, then, is which of these possibilities will provide the maximum satisfaction. And the activity of God in each occasion is to envisage and suggest that idea. This activity Whitehead calls, "appetition," since God's function is to stimulate in each occasion of experience an appetite for the ideal response, while limiting the range of other possibilities available. Thus, God acts simultaneously to sustain the general order of the universe AND to open up opportunity for novelty in the evolutionary process. The ideal possibility of response in each occasion of experience is, in fact, a novel approach to both maximal satisfaction and maximal harmony.

To put clearly the meaning of "satisfaction" and "harmony" in this context will require the risk of seeming repetitious. What Cobb is suggesting is that in God what is sheer multiplicity of occasions of experience has unity--has some patterning, some structure as a whole! That is, the universe might be likened to a sensitive, living organism, permeated through-and-through with the energy and mind of God, and functioning as a whole, though made up of a multiplicity of

individually-functioning entities, each only partially aware of, and only partially responsive to, the perspective of the whole and the thrust of the whole into novelty. This less-than-ideal responsiveness of the parts to the perspective of the whole results in dis-harmony within the organism, and leads Cobb to suggest that THE ONE AIM pervading God's activity in *every* occasion of experience is to stimulate change in the direction of harmony by envisaging for *each* occasion of experience the ideal possibility for a wholesome response. Thus, God seeks the wholesome functioning of the whole, and its creative advance into novelty.

However, from the perspective of each new occasion of experience, awareness of the ideal possibility of harmony (i.e., awareness of the aim of God) would represent awareness of only one possibility among a number of possibilities suggested by the outcomes of past occasions of experience. This "ideal response" would be perceived as but one alternative among several from which to choose--if indeed it were consciously perceived at all.

The satisfactions derived from responses to less-than-ideal possibilities in a given occasion are relative, and become part of the data for decisions in subsequent occasions. But God is experienced in the data of satisfaction-dissatisfaction as "the judgment of a tenderness which loses nothing that can be saved." The positive value of every response is retained *everlastingly* in God, even those contained in experiences that are destructive of harmony, and synthesized with the data of each subsequent occasion to form the concrete ideal possibility for harmony in that occasion. By limiting, but not eliminating, other possibilities for response to a given moment of experience minimal order is maintained in the universe, and some measure of freedom as well. Though God is thus intimately involved in every occasion of experience at every level of consciousness, the greater the consciousness the greater the freedom of response. And also the greater the responsibility for achieving the ideal of harmony.

Johnson, Teilhard de Chardin, Whitehead and Cobb because they tend to perceive the universe as a living organism, and God as the "living soul" of it, suggest an environment within which praying may be understood as a process of becoming increasingly aware of, and increasingly responsive to, the Soul of the whole.

The attitude of humility which "inherits the earth" comes naturally within the perspective of intimate, organismic participation in the pulse-beat of the total universe. And praying opens up the possibility for achieving such perspective.

The spirit of adventure which "grasps for the ideal" comes spontaneously within the perspective of intimate involvement in the thrust of the universe toward harmony, and praying opens up the possibility for sensing the "growing edge of change" in that direction. To

become aware of the potential for wholesomeness in the novel, and of an invitation to realize that potential--this is for me the challenge and excitement inherent in the experience of praying!

And in praying I may sense a Presence whose thrust toward the ideal includes my own ultimate satisfaction, and invites my intimate participation in mutual endeavor. Seeking knowledge of the ideal possibility in each occasion of experience--the possibility God is offering as the ideal response in that particular moment; and responding to whatever wisdom is perceptible--this is for me the interplay which describes the experience of praying as fellowship with God in a common purpose! with the joy of fellowship as special bonus!

I

MUSINGS ABOUT THE DYNAMICS OF PRAYER

---Frank Kimper

During the week I tried to find some handle to help me grasp the nature of God's relation to the universe, and the character of his activity in it--as it relates to praying. All comparisons are limited and faulty, especially so when trying to talk about God, but I know of no alternative. Anyway, I found it helpful to compare what I perceive to be God's relation to the micro-universe which is me, and the equipment with which I have been endowed--body, mind and talents. In my micro-universe I perceive that I have a body, but I am *not* my body. I have a mind, but I am *not* my mind. I have talents, but I am *not* those talents. I am everywhere PRESENT in my body, and it is this "spiritual presence" which distinguishes my body as "living" rather than "dead." I cannot describe "me" really, other than to say that I am intensely aware of me, and that I am intensely aware of being intensely aware of me.

Likewise, I know *I* am not the Organizing and Energizing Principle sustaining the order and vitality of my body; however I am very influential in affecting the functioning of my body in the direction of either illness or health. And *I* am not the Energizing Force supporting the functioning of my mind, but I am intimately and influentially involved in directing its activity, disciplining its potential for memory, logic and imagining in purposeful ways. Neither am *I* the Dynamic in those talents which are uniquely mine; however, I am responsible for initiating and directing the actualization of that potential into useful tools of self-expression. In this micro-universe God and I are intimately related as co-habitants with a common destiny. What I mean is that we share the limitations and potentialities of specific "givens" and seek together to fulfill all the possibilities inherent in that micro-universe: health of body, maturity of mind, and the development and productive investment of talents. To be aware of, and to respond appropriately to, the possibilities God envisages for me in each moment is to make MY contribution toward that destiny we share in common.

But whether I focus attention on me, or on mineral, vegetable, animal or other persons, I visualize each entity as a micro-universe in which God and that entity are related in the process of achieving a common destiny. And again, I mean that each shares the limitations and potentialities of specific "given" and seek *together* to fulfill all the possibilities inherent in that particular micro-universe. Yet all these micro-universes are complexly inter-related and inter-dependent, which suggests the possibility of an "organismic destiny" as well. In either case, the activity of God is not that of an "outsider." Rather, God's activity is that of an "Intimate Insider" who, nevertheless, functions

within the pervue of an overall perspective--a perspective no single entity can grasp--which may cause any single entity to perceive as sheer tragedy what in the over-all perspective may have creative dimensions. The intention of this "Intimate Insider" in every occasion of experience is to encourage and facilitate the actualization of all the possibilities inherent within each micro-universe, AND to achieve harmony among themany micro-universes making up the whole. From the center of my own micro-universe the intimacy and excitement of this working relation is real, and my concern is to cooperate with this intention of God, if I can, within the arena of my own life experience.

This concern is central to praying for me. Basically, my concern is the appropriate use of whatever freedom I may have in relation to my own equipment: with respect to body, to secure maximum health; with respect to mind, to secure maximum sensitivity to past and present experience, and future possibilities; with respect to talents, to develop maximum potential for unique self-expression. I assume that what that maximum is ONLY GOD CAN ENVISAGE, and that praying offers Him an opportunity to share with me in my finitude an awareness of some possibility calling for specific, though varying, kinds of responses in each occasion of experience. This awareness MAY COME through any reflection on experience, but reflection specifically focused on what may be the "ultimate possibility" for me in a given moment I call "prayer." It assumes a God actively concerned to reveal truth about ultimates--not only the WHAT, but the HOW. And it assumes a God actively involved in the process of moving toward ultimates in terms of the "givenness" of any present moment. So prayer is, in a sense, a conference between co-habitants of finite forms of matter for the sake of cooperation in creative activity.

II

I live in my own little perceptual world, a world experienced through my six senses which are my only contact with REALITY. I believe in some objective REALITY because I sense that the me who is seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, touching and intuiting is in these ways experiencing what is NOT ME. In this way, also, I become aware of the character of what is ME and NOT ME. Such becoming aware emerges out of all experience, but especially for me out of what I call praying.

My perceptual world is a very finite world. By comparing my perceptions with those of other persons in the past and present, I attempt to discover what is TRUTH, but even when there is a consensus of perceptions among finite persons, the need for correction soon becomes obvious, because new experience provides new perceptions. And every new perception has to be assimilated in such a way as to make sense to me. This demand that the data of experience fit together into some ordered whole is an expression of an elemental search for meaning.

My psyche is an ORDERING AGENT, instinctively geared to shuffle all sensory input into some frame of reference that makes the *interaction* of what is perceived as ME with what is perceived as NOT ME as understandable and as satisfying as possible.

This is so stated to emphasize the fact that there is a perceived ME that brings its own demands to the interaction with the perceived NOT ME. The result is bona fide INTERACTION, not one conditioning the passive other. But the demands of the psyche are ALWAYS AMBIGUOUS, and so the most striking characteristic of ME is tension. For instance: I demand inclusion in community, but at the very same time demand separateness. I demand recognition as an equal in a world of equals, but at the very same time demand that I be seen and treated as somehow special--unique. I demand that I be free to do what I choose to think and do, but at the same time demand that I be loved by those who demand the same freedom. I long to be able to actualize the seemingly infinite possibilities for knowing and acting that suggest themselves to my imagination, but at the very same time I want to feel secure in a safe little world without the risk of hurt and failure associated with bumping into the walls (or falling off the edges) of finiteness.

To say the least, with such tensions characterizing the very essence of my being, DYNAMIC INTERACTION with all that is NOT ME is inevitable. Whether these thrusts from within are labeled "autonomous complexes" and "archetypal themes" or "whatever," they are directive and purposive in their unending demands for some measure of inner balance, a satisfaction that can come only with some measure of balance in one's interaction with his environment. It is not without significance, I think, that persons are spoken of (or speak of themselves) on occasion as being "unbalanced," when the demands of the psyche are met by the environment in such one-sided fashion: like granting separation without providing relatedness. If in such an environment the psyche's purposive thrust toward relatedness would simply "turn off," one might at least feel placid in his separation. But the psyche is not like that; rather it transforms all the energy of being into anger, thus affirming its own value, and thus demanding the same affirmation by the environment. Then if the anger, too, is rejected (as bad), separation is all the more intensified, and the need for relatedness as well. In this as well as many other ways the whole perceptual world of a human being becomes a complex experience of lights and shadows (to pick up Jung's symbolism). And it is only as we are able to restore some balance of tension within our own inner world that we move toward wholeness.

Getting in touch with the dynamism which is ME in its varying dimensions, I've discovered, is also to be in touch with the dynamism which is God. In the core of my being the elemental thrusts of life I sense as "the breath of God"--life-giving, and somehow both ME and NOT ME: GOD. I organize my own private, perceptual world from their

interaction with my environment. It's my attempt to make some sense out of the data of experience. This search for meaning is central in praying for me--it's an attempt to put it all together into some meaningful whole, so that I can cooperate with what I sense to be the purposive thrust of my being within the context of my environment. Or it is asking the question, "What is seeking to happen in me, and through me, and to me for good--within my environment?" That at the moment is as close as I can come to the mood of praying for me.

III

I need to affirm again my experience of God as co-habitant with me in the micro-universe I call my body--an "Intimate Insider" who works with me to fulfill all the possibilities inherent in my active involvement in the Universe as a whole. To be aware of, and to respond appropriately to, God's suggestions is crucial if I am to make my contribution to the destiny we share in common.

In this regard hypnosis highlights for me some dimensions of the process, and the impact one mind can have on another that is "listening," so to speak. Based on a high degree of confidence in another that what he will suggest is (1) possible, and (2) salutary, one may decide to open his mind to another's influence. This means to me, allowing his attention to be brought into narrow focus upon another's specific suggestion(s). In this way he actually allows his mind to be "conditioned" to perceive experience in a new and different way, and affirms his willingness to respond in terms of his altered perception.

The expectation of a salutary influence finding expression in salutary experience is the alluring quality of praying. In the context of such a mood of expectancy God is able to focus the attention of a reflective, open, trustful listener upon certain thoughts which he "accepts" as both *possible* and *good*, and to "condition" a person to respond to life as suggested.

This emphasizes the significance of both *sensitivity* and *awareness*. These seem to be different to me, but I'm not sure they are. Anyway, our discussion of psychic phenomena reminded me again of the fact that a multitude of those stimuli which impinge upon my mind every moment never really register in awareness. This may be because I am "insensitive"--unable to process the stimuli, or conditioned by experience to do "selective screening." In part this means I am aware of only what I expect to be aware of; in part it means I am aware of only those stimuli that match my super-ego's image of what is "acceptable."

It might be noted for instance that many parents report being aware of the slightest sound made by a sick child, sounds which at other times never register in consciousness at all. On the other hand,

an absent-minded professor may be so wrapped up in a single train of thought as to be totally unaware of all else that is going on around him. This latter resembles hypnotic experience in that the scope of one's awareness can be narrowed to a single focus. Though this intensifies awareness of particular stimuli, and eliminates awareness of others, it does not in any way eliminate the impact of those stimuli of which the entranced person is not aware.

Metaphorically, I think of that S.O.S. call from a private plane which subsequently crashed into uninhabited Alaskan tundra a few years ago. So far as is known only one person heard it--thousands of miles away on a ship at sea. This was strictly a matter of a particular kind of sensitivity at that particular moment--an open channel tuned in on that wave length. There was lots of equipment scattered far and wide which might have picked up that energy impulse, but none of it was sensitized to translate it into conscious experience.

So also with most of the psychic energy that is impinging upon us all the time, screened out by insensitivity, or perhaps by selective inattention. Which leads me to think that I may need to extend the range of my personal awareness if my experience in prayer is to become more meaningful. That is, praying may be a special kind of expectancy--being sensitive and open to the revelation of God as "suggestion" which is experienced telepathically or intuitively, and translated into awareness as feeling, impulse, insight or whatever.

IV

This week I am impressed by the way a mood of "sensitive appreciation" stimulates awareness of intimate, personal relationship with all that is--gives birth to an experience of awe, wonder and reverence. In such a "spirit of openness" to genuine encounter, the treeness of a tree, or the rockness of a rock, or the personhood of a person speaks forcibly to me of the Presence of God. Maybe this is the necessary mood for praying which leads us into what Buber calls a "hallowing encounter with our environment in the lived concrete," sensing "I-Thouness" in all "I-It" relations, allowing mere contacts to be experienced as "authentic encounters," "real meeting."

But such musing leads me to reflect again on the dynamic and organismic character of such encounter. An important exchange takes place. Energy is transferred back and forth. Influence is felt. Change takes place. In some small way the whole universe is affected. That's what the word dynamic means: that there is energy in motion, related to or effecting change. That's what the word organismic means: that in the complexity of its structure and functioning the universe resembles a living thing. This is to say that the stuff of the universe is "energy" in one form or another, but always either involved

in or directing change. I exist as a "bundle of energy"--intelligently structured, but functionally active energy--intimately related to many other "bundles of energy"--"fields of force" interpenetrating and interdependent, extending throughout the entire reach of space-time. That each "field of force" is organized in a unique way serves to give it an individuality by which it may be identified, but in no way separates it from the many others which compose the whole, so that every "field of force" is continuously affecting and being affected by every other.

Telepathy, clairvoyance and psychokinesis are phenomena which strongly suggest that these "energy fields" are "in touch" with each other all the time, even though that bundle of energy which is "me," or that bundle of energy which is "you" may be quite unaware of it. Such "in touchness" seems to be unaffected by space or time; but "awareness" of being "in touch" seems to be inhibited by fear, hate, doubt; and enhanced by quiet confidence, appreciation and happiness. This latter I think is extremely significant, but I don't want to think about that right now.

Right now I'm intrigued with the idea that the kind of influence I exert upon other "energy fields" is, in a limited way, in my hands. I'm toying with the idea that the *energy content* of any thought is the *emotion* associated with it; and that it is the associated emotion which gives a thought either positive or negative force--determining both the intensity and the character of its influence. What I'm suggesting is that thoughts organize, focus and direct energy, whether or not those thoughts ever get translated into overt physical action: thoughts organize energy to create "negative" or "positive" (to mention only the extremes) fields of force. The person with a "green thumb" has positive thoughts about plants, appreciates their unique potential, respects their place in the economy of the whole. In this way all the energy of his being is organized and directed in such fashion as to create a very *positive* "field of force"--positive in the sense that it is harmonious with, and supportive of, the uniquely-structured fields-of-force we call plants. The further implications seem obvious. I feel this most keenly in my relations with other people: the angry person is that person whose thoughts have organized and focused the uniquely-structured field of force which he identifies as his "being" to fight; the fearful person is that person whose thoughts have organized the uniquely-structured field of force which he identifies as his being to flee.

I exist as a "bundle of energy"--intelligently structured, but functionally--active energy--intimately inter-related to many other "bundles of energy"--fields of force interpenetrating, and interdependent, making up the universe. In this welter of forces, no influence impinging on me is ever passively received; rather it is instantaneously evaluated, all the energy of my being organized to preserve my own unique structure (individuality), and to preserve my own autonomy. But at the same time every effort is made to preserve my sense of being

meaningfully related to the whole.

Because I'm assuming that all response to impinging forces--positive or negative--have a similar prayer what I'm really feeling in such a perspective is my own responsibility--the immense need to organize all the energy of my being to express sensitive appreciation, to affirm the uniqueness and autonomy and interdependence of every part of this awesome, wonderful universe. And I'm speculating that prayer is a responsible effort on my part to adjust my thoughts to view life from the perspective of the whole, so that the energy content of my thought may be organized and focused in support of the healthy, productive, harmonious functioning of each entity for the good of all.

V

My present interest is focused upon the tension between reason and faith. This, it seems to me, is the dilemma IN ME posed by the tension between my awareness of my own finitude, and my awareness of seemingly infinite possibilities for knowing and acting which are PRESENTLY beyond my grasp.

I accept Tillich's definition of *reason* as "the meaningful structure of mind and reality." As such, reason is obviously finite and uniquely personal: it is *my* perception of, *my* orientation to, my total environment. But always within the scope of reason is the hint of dimensions of reality beyond my comprehension. Thus the "reach of reason" constantly exceeds its grasp, and the "reach of reason" is faith.

For me, faith always includes (1) the certainty that there is always more I CAN know than I DO know about my environment, and (2) the conviction that my being is somehow ultimately dependent upon discovering and relating meaningfully to that unknown beyond my grasp. The "beyond" therefore seems to GRASP ME, to CALL ME, and DEMAND that I participate in a destiny that is UNIQUELY MINE. Thus, faith always includes *commitment to act on hunches* inferred from reason, but never provable by reason, which is to say, faith includes courage.

Of the "Call of faith" I am CERTAIN! Of the specific action CALLED FOR in any given moment I am NEVER CERTAIN. This is to say that faith may be corrupted by reason, confusing WHAT SEEMS TO BE with WHAT IS. Actually, reason (being finite) can be sure only about WHAT SEEMS TO BE. Or, to put it another way, all I can ever affirm is that "this is MY perception of reality," but I can NEVER BE SURE that my perception actually corresponds with factual truth. NEVERTHELESS, the "call of faith" always demands some kind of decisive action.

The "demand for action" in the nitty-gritty of everyday living constitutes both the *appeal* and the *dread* of faith. The appeal of faith is in the "call of God" to unravel the mysteries of the still-undiscovered dimensions of reality--to expand and enrich one's life experience. As old perceptions are modified by new experience, still other possibilities beckon, exciting the imagination (this is the ecstasy of faith) and demanding active exploration (this is the dread of faith). The ambivalence between ecstasy and dread is caused by the gap between reach and grasp--between faith and reason.

If I cannot guarantee the validity of WHAT APPEARS TO BE a new dimension of truth, it is mighty risky to act AS THOUGH IT WERE IN FACT TRUTH. So courage is a very crucial aspect of faith since only through courageous action can one test the validity of faith. To face honestly the possibility that what appears to be ultimate may actually turn out to be only transitory is "dreadful" (as Kierkegaard suggested) because a transitory value, if taken as ultimate, can have painful and destructive results. But to "run that risk" in taking decisive action is to take the "leap of faith," a leap motivated by an imagination filled with the hope of a more exciting or satisfying life experience.

For me, as a Christian, the symbol of faith is "the Christ." As such it is very personal. It confronts me again and again with those values I sense to be TRUE values, and intensifies in me a felt need to organize my life in terms of them. This intense inner demand is what I experience as the captivating, yet terrifying, call to reach beyond my grasp. Since a symbol cannot be understood apart from one's own personal experience associated with it, "the Christ" symbol emerges for me from the way I perceive and identify with the historical Jesus within the framework of my own personal history. Thus for me "the Christ" symbolizes the personal love relationship between God and men (including me), and all the possibilities for creative community living among men and earth. That God's relationship with men *is loving* the reach of faith affirms in me. More personally, my faith in "the Christ" is an unprovable conviction that God loves me perfectly and unconditionally--that the attitudes and actions of Jesus reveal the way the God who is both Creator and Sustainer of the Universe relates *to me, here and now*. "The Christ" symbol was born out of this inner conviction, and therefore has the power to recreate in me, again and again, the immediacy and ecstasy of that conviction; and so to call me again and again to respond to every life situation as though God were loving people NOW the way I perceive Jesus to have been loving people THEN.

Prayer is for me an expression of faith in "the Christ." Quiet reflection keeps the symbol fresh and vital. In that perspective I invest my life, organizing and reorganizing my thinking and action to bring it into harmony with the symbol of my faith so that that symbol can be given appropriate expression in the immediate circumstances of my life. And giving it appropriate expression in the immediate

circumstances of my life is a "leap of faith."

VI

I am intrigued by Magee's suggestion that the concern of confession in praying is to grow toward that state of being characterized by the spiritual stature of "the Christ." This says two things to me: (1) that *the Christ*, as the symbol of mature spiritual stature, gathers up in it all those values which are perceived by me to be of ultimate concern, and (2) that *the Christ* symbol is the central focus in praying, stimulating and directing growth.

A symbol that is a symbol is very personal, and very powerful. In a generalized way "the Christ" confronts me with the ideal possibility for my life, and so intensifies in me the urge to actualize in my own personality those qualities which characterize the ideal; and to organize every aspect of my being to give expression to them in my life experience. This intense desire is what I have previously spoken of as the captivating, yet terrifying, call to reach beyond my grasp.

By keeping *the Christ* symbol "in focus" praying keeps my being in a state of creative imbalance. Being immature, the whole thrust of my being challenges the status quo; and demands change. That's good, even if it feels uncomfortable at times. And praying, while it increases my sensitivity to the ideal posture I might assume as my way of relating to life, it does much more: praying undergirds my being with the confidence that I am being loved NOW whatever my state of immaturity, and that I will be loved a MINUTE, an HOUR, a MONTH, a YEAR from now whatever my state of immaturity may be THEN. This is the GROUND of my freedom and courage to take the risks involved in trying to actualize the values symbolized by "the Christ" in my interpersonal living. So "the Christ" symbolizes not only "ideal possibilities for becoming," but "the undergirding of the Everlasting Arms." And praying keeps the symbol fresh, alive, and "in focus."

Another way of saying this is that "the whole thrust of my being, challenging the status quo" is not experienced as cold, impersonal, inner dissatisfaction with myself; rather it is felt as a Warm Personal Presence in the core of my being patiently encouraging me to try out new possibilities for improving my way of relating to my total environment. And praying keeps me "in touch," keeps me repenting, amending, experimenting.

Having said that, however, I need to say that "the Christ," as symbol of mature spiritual stature, is no static symbol. I have said that it gathers up in it all those values which are perceived by me to be of ultimate concern. But my perception of what is of ultimate concern is itself changing as new experience provides new understanding.

The symbol of "the Christ" seems much richer, and much more alluring than yesteryear's, having gathered up into it all the wisdom distilled from the living of these days. So Jahoda, Erikson and others help in their own way to inform and enrich the symbol which gives direction, meaning and power to my life; and when I refer to *others* I mean to include all of you as you share with me, and with each other.

Like lodestars certain qualities always seem to stand out as measures of maturity, as for example AUTONOMY TEMPERED WITH LOVE: that responsible use of freedom which represents neither passive conformity to the will and expectations of others, nor callous violation of their rights and interests; but a sensitivity to the needs of both self and others which is basic to inter-dependent living. Or INTIMACY TEMPERED WITH IDENTITY: that quiet trustfulness in relationship which not only clearly differentiates between *me* and *thee*, but affirms the infinite worth of both; for to know deep down inside that I am not simply a reflection of others' perceptions and expectations, and that others are not simply projections of my own feelings and attitudes, is to feel free to participate as an individual with other individuals in creative encounter. From whatever source these ideas come they enhance and clarify my understanding of *the Christ* symbol, the IMAGE of those creative possibilities which constitute the captivating-terrifying call of faith, and the FOCUS of that inner struggle which I label confessional prayer.

The fact is, however, that the heartbeat of *the Christ symbol* for me comes in the way I perceive and identify with the reports and interpretations of the historical Jesus included in the gospels. The inner struggle which characterizes confessional prayer for me is symbolized there by Gethsemane, Calvary and the Empty Tomb.

In brief, Gethsemane represents for me the struggle of faith to overcome the threats posed by my finitude. The demand of my ego for safety, security and status in cultural terms is intense, and the defensive maneuvering of my ego is subtly convincing. Pride is a powerful defender of my grasp of reason. So it's agonizing to be confronted by the call of "the Christ" in every situation--agonizing because it may involve Calvary--which makes it difficult to find the courage to pray, "Not my will, but Thine be done."

Calvary represents for me the reality of rejection and suffering. The possibility of retaliation by enemies, and of desertion by friends is an awful price to pay to respond to the call to love as Jesus loved. The possibility of death to the ego and/or the body is real. Have I the courage to act upon my intuitive feeling that life has value, meaning and continuity only in loving as Jesus loved, even though at the moment of decision I have no immediate proof that it is so--enough courage to pray in spite of the possibility of suffering, "Father, into Thy hands I commend my life"?

Joseph's empty garden tomb represents for me the ultimate victory of faith in the Christ. The courage to accept my unique call to love as I am loved by God, despite the possibility of immediate negative consequences, emerges from faith in the ultimate victory of love--from the conviction that ultimately experience will confirm the values and purposes for which I am willing now to risk my being.

Let me illustrate how my own confessional struggle is catalyzed and focused by the Christ symbol as it comes alive in an episode in the ministry of Jesus. As I read the gospels, the Christ is always seen as transcending threats to the ego in order to be loving, and is always contrasted with the failure of the defensive disciples.

For example: Jesus and his disciples were trudging along a lonely road through Samaria. The day had been a hot one. They were covered with sweat and dust; they were tired and hungry. What they needed right then was a place to rest for the night, and some food. But they were in enemy country. The Samaritans hated Jews. So Jesus sent two of his disciples ahead to a little village to arrange tactfully with the innkeeper for shelter and food. But they got nowhere in their negotiations; the bigotted villagers would have nothing to do with them, and summarily chased them out of town.

This was the confronting situation--a Gethsemane in which the choice was between reacting to the threat posed by rejection, or responding to the call of the Christ to love as God loves. The glaring contrast between the attitude of Jesus and that of his disciples points up the alternatives. The disciples, overwhelmed by the threat to their egos, reacted to defend their individual and collective pride. Each one separately, and all together, felt the need to reclaim their ego-status. They wanted to burn down the village; that, they felt sure, would do the trick.

By contrast, Jesus said simply, "You know not what spirit you are of"--that is, you are not aware of the Reality of Love in the Universe suggested by the rain which falls on the unjust as well as the just, or the sun which shines on the evil as well as the good. To know oneself loved like that is to have confidence that one's own infinite worth as a person will ultimately be confirmed despite the threat posed by the immediate circumstances--is to have the courage to accept without retaliation the pain of personal rejection. In the courage to love as God loves is the possibility for reconciliation, brotherhood and self-fulfillment: i.e., despite the fact of Calvary, the victory represented by an empty garden tomb is real.

What I am saying is that confession for me is characterized by such struggle; but without some clear conception of the qualities of personal and social maturity symbolized by "the Christ," there would be no struggle. And I very much suspect, no growth either.

VII

The growth process is as central in praying as in physiology or education. Praying for me is concerned with the full development of the whole person, and with the full development of a community of whole persons.

Life begins wholly *contained* within nature. While the uniting of sperm and ovum initiates the process of growth, at that point life is characterized by absolute finitude, utter dependence, and complete potentiality. Nevertheless, the innate thrust of being is toward becoming a self-conscious individual, separate and distinct from all the other aspects of the world of nature.

Yet at first individuality is simply potential. The consciousness of separateness comes only gradually, and with it comes separation anxiety--some fear of a loss of significant relationship with the environment. Despite this, however, the thrust from within urgently demands differentiation.

According to Westman, the garden of Eden symbolizes the symbiosis of infancy, and the Genesis stories deal with each human being's growth as an individual. For instance, naming every part of the environment is an elemental task, for the power to differentiate marks a first stage in the growth of consciousness. Identifying the self as separate from, but related to, things and others is critical for independent thought and action.

But to *name* is not enough. To the power to differentiate one thing from another must be added the power to differentiate the permissible attitude and action from the prohibited. So to develop a sense of values by which to discriminate between acceptable and unacceptable ways of relating to the environment becomes a necessity if orderly living is to be maintained within the family and the larger community--including the universe.

Thus, intrinsic individuality emerges from its state of pure potential slowly, and as it becomes increasingly extrinsic, it is recognized and experienced as personal identity. The struggle for identity begins so early as to be but one aspect of emerging self-consciousness. I speak of the *struggle* for identity only because personhood does not evolve in isolation, but in the midst of interpersonal relations which for a child have vital survival value. Each of these significant-other persons also struggles for identity, and one very important part of a parent's image of himself is his image of what his child should become in response to his parenting. When the important-adult's image of what his child should become IS IN OPPOSITION to the child's *own* growing image of what he might become, independent of them and all they represent, the struggle begins.

It is in this interactive process that identity is forged via a long series of identifications. In a "gracious environment" the child feels free to be somewhat selective in his identifications, choosing both consciously and unconsciously to identify with those persons whose values and patterns of living and striving seem to match his own sense of who he is; and ignoring others. BUT, in a "threatening environment" he may feel coerced by adults to adopt their goals for him, and to conform to their values, without regard to his own individuality.

In such a dilemma he may choose to maintain superficial relations with the significant adults in his environment AT THE EXPENSE OF his own unique development. Or he may determine to be the special individual he is at the expense of pleasant relations with his elders. Or he may try to effect a compromise. But in whatever degree this tension leads to compromise a *shadow side* of his being develops, composed of all the unrealized potential which is perceived to be unacceptable to them, and all the repressed impulses which are perceived as a threat to pleasurable social relations. For this reason the primal energy of being may seem to be evil and dangerous.

Thus, to become the whole individual one is potentially he must face and assimilate this "dark side" of his personality. And for me this has been a slow process, made possible only as I have become increasingly aware that my environment is more *gracious* than my early conditioning had led me to believe. I am not sure which is "chicken" and which is "egg," but my growing awareness of existing in a loving community of human beings has paralleled my growing awareness of existing in a loving relationship with a gracious God. For me both are essential; and "the Christ" as symbol of the character of my relationship with God has been the crucial dynamic for growth through praying.

A "gracious God," experienced as an inner affirmation of my being, offers me the freedom to look at the "dark side" of my personality without fear of rejection. The opportunity to think in my own unique directions, and to reach out through my own unique potentials, has allowed me to get fresh glimpses of an image of me I can identify with. This "image of me I can identify with" keeps changing, but it has continuity and identifiable character. It is "the Christ"--MY Christ--a Living Presence who lures me to be me, a Living Image revealing to me the ME I can be.

In this perspective what had seemed "dark and threatening" is really "bright and exciting," and this aspect of confession is more like an adventure into new dimensions of living. Pride is a persistent pest, but only because the persistent threat of rejection makes it difficult for me to accept fully the reality of my finitude. Perception is limited and faulty. Mistakes are inevitable. But for me these inescapable evidences of finitude symbolize the threat of loss of love. My ego is not easily convinced of the reality of a gracious God. It is

willing to talk about it, even to listen wistfully while others talk about it; but to trust it enough just to be who I am . . . that's still tough for me.

This is to say that confession is made possible for me as the reality of "grace" grips me. This is why adoration precedes confession I think, for adoration provides a perspective in which grace is a gripping reality. But the way this happens in my experience is always partly mystery, and partly disciplined openness--the wind blows where it will, and I cannot really tell from whence it comes, or whither it goes. So I presume it is with everyone who is being born of the Spirit.

VIII

In any discussion of sin, sinning and confessing sins it is important for me to focus on the positive dimension of hope in all such striving. This is because it is so easy to get lost in the negative aspects of sinning and end up moralizing.

Every human being is born with an innate sense of his own infinite worth; this he affirms in every expression of his being, both positive and negative, throughout his lifetime. And every human being is born with an innate need to have others also affirm his infinite worth in every expression of their being related to him. When this psychic (or spiritual) need is met, a person feels loved. When it is not met, he feels rejected. And the crucial issue in one's intrapsychic as well as inter-personal experience is the issue of which predominates. If the feeling of "being loved" is predominant, one lives in a state of grace. BUT, if the feeling of "being rejected" is predominant, one lives in a state of sin--in a state of alienation. Sin is the experience of "feeling estranged" in interpersonal relations (which, of course, includes one's relationship with God). Though the intensity of such feelings of estrangement may vary widely, from practically nil to practically overwhelming, the experience of feeling estranged (or rejected) is the experience of living in sin.

The ways a person may react to sin are appropriately called "sins," but all sinning as I see it has but one purpose: to demand in compulsive fashion the love which is not felt to be offered spontaneously--to satisfy that innate need to be affirmed as precious by other human beings. Furthermore, sins are always camouflaged by defensive maneuvers intended to affirm one's own being as precious--like rationalizing the innocence of the sinner, or projecting the blame on other persons or things, etc., because at the root are feelings of lonely isolation which result from perceived rejection. For this reason, to condemn sins in such a way as to communicate a rejection of the sinner only adds insult to injury, and intensifies the feeling of estrangement.

That's why moralizing fails.

Rather sin and sinning need to be understood--in oneself and in others--as "a cry for love." Magee mentions many expressions of sin which illustrate this: (1) the need to be right, and never to be criticized, doubted or questioned, (2) the need to manipulate others, and never to be exploited oneself, (3) the need to "get by" or "get around" one's problems, (4) the need for special privilege, and not have anyone mind making the necessary sacrifices involved, (5) the need to be understood no matter how morose or irritable one is, (6) or the need to be excused from responsibility without any questions asked.

I disagree with Magee's emphasis that "these neurotic claims add up to the ego's attempt at self-glorification." These are S.O.S. calls for help from others to relieve the agonizing emptiness and loneliness resulting from perceived rejection. That the forms such calls take tend to elicit more rejection is beside the point here; to understand the purpose is the point. So, to dub these urgent pleas for love "a devil's pact in which a life of false glory is exchanged for the authentic value found in the real person" seems moralistic.

Sinning is a spiraling pattern of destructive behavior which can be interrupted only by a combination of grace and confession. Because grace is sensitive to the inner agony of sin in human being it can affirm the preciousness of the person and at the same time face openly and honestly the destructive nature of his behavior. And confession, then, is a response of the person himself to grace in which he both claims the affirmation that is offered him, and, recognizing the self-defeating character of his behavior, commits himself to experimenting with alternative patterns of relating.

The experience of grace may be perceived as "being loved by God" OR as "being loved by a person or persons," or both. But to feel loved by God even when one feels rejected by persons is the experience which seemingly makes it possible for one to love even those who appear to hate him. The response, then, is essentially a response to a loving God who lives and moves and has his being in, and among, enemies as well as friends.

But it is the undergirding and persistent experience of grace which frees one to be confessional. And this means primarily, admitting to personal responsibility for one's own behavior. The emphasis is on the fact that "I have sinned." I am responding to the alienating sense of rejection I feel from others, and I am therefore responsible for the self-defeating character of *my* responses. I am not limited to destructive responses; I can respond in alternative ways if I choose to. In such perspective others are not exonerated from responsibility for their own behavior, but it recognizes that they are responsible ONLY for their own behavior; and that I am responsible for mine. It simply refuses to make THEIR unloving behavior AN EXCUSE for my own. And so it eliminates

"bitching"--i.e., blaming others (or circumstances) for the way I act, or think, or feel.

Bitching is so often the content of what we have in more recent years chosen to call, "catharsis." But cathartic bitching is not confession. Confession is an admission that I am personally responsible for my own attitudes and behavior which leads to an honest evaluation of both attitudes and behavior against some objective standard, and to a commitment to change.

But "that experience of grace" which makes such an admission of personal responsibility possible, ALSO becomes "the objective standard" by which both attitudes and behavior are evaluated. And grace inspires and sustains commitment to seek to live by that standard as best one can, whatever that may mean in concrete terms in a given situation. In essence, then, to confess means to quit bitching--i.e., to quit rationalizing and projecting blame for my behavior on others. And, assuming personal responsibility for my own actions, to commit myself to loving as I am loved. However, I am convinced that without some experience of grace (however it comes), there will be no confession. There may be plenty of bitching, but no confession.

IX

I am concerned at the moment with understanding the place of "consequences" in all of my experience, including praying. Generally speaking, I feel I have no other way to learn from experience except to evaluate what appear to be "consequences." I see the apparent effects ensuing from action of every kind as the only basis I have for ordering my experience in a purposive manner. The ground of my faith in justice and love as characteristics of the nature of God is my perception of our "reaping what is sown," a perception which I interpret as God's insistent demand for a disciplined use of freedom. There is no escape that I can see from consequences related to any and all activity within the universe.

Praying, therefore, must also have its consequences, negative as well as positive since I am no less finite when I am praying--no less prone to error. As in any activity, the effects may or may not be perceivable. Furthermore, what are perceived as consequences by one person may be completely overlooked by another. Jesus is said to have prayed in Gethsemane. I must assume it had its effect on him, but just exactly *what effect* I cannot possibly know. All I know is that outwardly there followed the hell of trial and crucifixion (or so the gospels report), and inwardly the serenity of courageous faith (which included also the agony of existential doubt).

I cannot know precisely the exact effects of any single activity in a given moment in time BECAUSE I AM FINITE. The complexity of forces interacting in any given moment is incomprehensible. To cope with the anxiety this fact may generate in me I am tempted to oversimplify, and assume a one-to-one relation between a particular action and any that happens subsequently. In less anxious moments I view this as naive and unrealistic, but that really never eliminates my temptation.

The fact is, however, that for me praying is but one activity among many, a great number of which have a common purpose. And the fact is that I share common concerns with a great many people in the complexities of interdependent living--people whose praying is also but one activity among many. So I try to be satisfied with my conviction that praying makes its own unique contribution to any given life situation, even though I am not exactly sure what that is; and that even though the energy activated by praying be counteracted by wholly opposite influences, it still has its own unique effect in modifying the intensity of those opposing forces.

I continue to pray because praying focuses my attention on that perspective within which I have chosen to live my life. The symbol of that perspective is "the Christ." The attitude symbolized by "the Christ" is love. Praying, therefore, has the effect of clarifying and enriching the meaning of "the Christ" symbol for me, of critically evaluating my experience in maintaining an attitude of love in the nitty-gritty of everyday living, and of adjusting the focus of my energy so that it contributes both to my own fulfillment as an individual--as Frank Kimper, and to the development of a community (society or nation or world) of individuals.

But for me the discussion that has been taking place in this class through these weeks has the same effect. My interaction with members of the counseling staff of the Pastoral Counseling Center has the same effect. My experience with persons in my therapy groups has the same effect. My relations with my family have the same effect these days. Praying is but one activity among a number of significant activities that contribute to my growth; and I see no need to elevate it to some "special status" as a causative agent.

Likewise, the one time I was healed instantaneously the person I knew would pray for me hadn't prayed yet; it all happened before she even knew about the need. I had lots of love from friends, and a good physician, and a healthy body, and at that moment a sense of openness and expectancy; and it happened. And who can say what did it?

One of the greatest satisfactions in my ministry is that many people have said they have benefited from it. But some have benefited without my even knowing I was doing anything. And some have received no benefit despite my "best efforts" to help. Amid a welter of interacting forces I live and move and have my being, unable to comprehend

the complexity of it all. I don't like being finite, but I don't have an option. So I try to BE, fully, who I am; and to BE, fully, in relationship with other BEING--with the hope that in whatever form that takes the experience will be positive, beneficial, growth-producing for me and for those around me when evaluated in the light of the symbol of "the Christ."

X

Intercession I understand best as an expression of caring about the well-being of another (or others). Its context is an attitude of love which sees all persons (and all creation) as diverse expressions of the wisdom and power of God, which elicits a response of awe, wonder and adoration from the depths of my being--like that in this paraphrase of the 8th Psalm:

O Lord, my Lord, how excellent are all thy works . . .
 Anyway I turn I am amazed by the awesome majesty of thy creation.
 When I look at the heavens--the work of thy hands--
 The moon and the stars which thou hast ordained,
 I ask myself, "Who am I that thou art mindful of me?"
 Yet thou hast endowed me with power to reason and remember and
 dream,
 And blessed me with a sense of thy loving presence.
 Still, thy ways are a great mystery to me:
 The life-giving power of air and sunshine and rain,
 The bursting of seeds into bud, and the fading of buds into seeds;
 The flashing of light from cloud to cloud and the ensuing thunder's
 rumble
 O Lord, who can comprehend it?
 Who can understand the tenderness flowing from another's heart
 Or the insight coming from another's mind,
 Much less the hate . . . or the hurt . . . on lips or fingertips.
 Yet in it all is thy wisdom revealed:
 In the silent stars . . . in the quaking earth . . .
 But supremely in the capacities of men to love . . . and hate
 To choose . . . and learn from choosings.
 Truly thou hast crowned us with glory and honor,
 For thou hast blessed us with the highest privilege--
 The privilege of fellowship with thee.
 O Lord, my Lord, how excellent are all thy works!

All the diverse expressions of God's creative wisdom and power are dynamic *fields of force*, inter-penetrating and interacting with each other. That each *field of force* is organized in a unique way serves to give it an individuality by which it may be identified, but in no way separates it from the many others which compose the whole;

so that in some degree *every* field of force is continuously influenced by every other field of force throughout the entire reach of space-time, whether we are aware of it or not.

Since 1966 Cleve Backster (Backster Research Foundation, NYC, NY) has been using the psychogalvanic reflex index as a measure of plant and animal response to environment. Polygraph readings indicate that plants have pronounced reactions to human thought, as for instance, violently agitated reactions to the thought of harming the plant. The results suggest a capability for perception in all living cells and the intercommunication of states of being among the energy fields--like the anxiety of a dog being registered in the life of a plant.

I mention this only to emphasize the inter-relatedness and interacting influence among all the dynamic fields throughout the whole. Separateness is an illusion created by ignorance and anxiety, and intercession is perhaps only an intensified expression of this interpenetrating influence--intensified perhaps by the focusing of thought and emotion (the energy content of thought) upon a *particular* field of force. Intercession does not *initiate communication*; nor does it *make contact*. This is already a reality. But it does determine the "thought content" of the communication, and the energy impact of it--whether it shall be faith rather than fear, and love rather than hate. Obviously, the posture of adoration then seems to be crucial as the context for positive intercessory influence.

If the "separateness" of all those fields of force that comprise the Universe IS an illusion, it seems clear to me that "alienation" is not. Feelings of estrangement seem to be common. Anxiety about non-being activates defenses to assure and affirm being, but creates the illusion of separation in the process. Yet the reality is alienation, not separation. And the only way out of loneliness and meaninglessness is through reconciliation into relatedness. Alienation is real, but love can overcome alienation, and this is the concern of intercession: to establish a love relation, or restore it; and to eliminate in the process whatever symptoms of alienation are apparent in the person, and in his experience with other persons and things. So healing is experienced as harmony--in the mind, in the body, in the family, etc.

It is understandable then that intercession is characterized by a reaching out in genuine concern for the well-being of others, motivated by an empathetic experience of whatever pain is being experienced by the other; and by an unconditional confidence in the intention of God to redeem man from his alienation which inspires hope and expectancy. Speaking from personal experience, I can affirm that those times when I have *felt intuitively* that God was immediately present to effect a particular change, the metamorphosis which took place was both radical and permanent--sometimes gradual, sometimes almost instantaneous.

And all I did was to accept the change and give thanks. At those times I seem to know with some mysterious certainty just what is going to happen, and it does. I am not surprised at all; just thankful.

In intercession this expectancy is apparently a crucial factor. But for me it also comes in these moments as much a gift as the changes themselves. And I confess I do not have any clear idea what paves the way for such experiences. So I agree with Magee that "cooperation with God is our part," yet I am not exactly certain what that means in terms of specific action or discipline, except perhaps to "be still," "to listen," "to be waiting and ready to respond as there is opportunity," all the while seeking with all the mind, all the heart, all the soul and all the strength available to me to maintain an attitude of love.

XI

When I think about praying as "petition," I resonate with the emphasis summarized in words attributed to Jesus: "My father never ceases working, and I am working with him." The phrase "with him" is inferred from four other affirmations in the gospel of John: namely, "I do nothing of myself; it is the Father who dwells in me who does the work." In traditional, symbolic language this suggests that I exist and participate in a dynamism characterized by creativity. Change is continuous in the processes of growth and productivity in which novelty is always a possibility. And any constructive involvement in this creative process is what it means to be "working with God."

For me there are two dimensions of involvement with God in his creative work: one is characterized by a posture of passive concentration, the other by a posture of active concentration. The hypnotic state with its mood of quiet, relaxed openness to suggestion; or stated differently, a posture of reverence and expectancy in the Presence of the vibrantly-creative Power in which we live and move and have our beings may amount to spontaneous and involuntary experiences of expanded awareness in which one feels both (1) most fully himself, and at the same time (2) most fully a participant in a larger dimension of reality.

George Eliot's statement that in her best writing a "not herself" took possession of her and made her feel "her own personality was merely an instrument through which the Spirit acted." Others like Mozart in music, Picasso in art, Shelley in poetry, Poincare and Pascal in mathematics, Carver in science, to name just a few, all seemed to be saying what Jesus is purported to have said: "I do nothing of myself; it is the Father who dwelleth in me who does the work."

When I have been quietly relaxed in my own inner being, and willing to "wait on the Lord," this has been my experience too. To put

this in non-symbolic language: at the moment when I experienced most fully the creative thrust of my own being, I felt myself most fully participant in the creative thrust of that Reality which is MORE than just me. To be sensitive to the ceaseless activity of Creative Mind and Energy living and moving within my being for good inspires faith: i.e., it inspires a stance of awe, trust and responsible response. This, it seems to me, is central in praying, and the motivation for the other dimension of involvement with God in his creative work: that characterized by a posture of active concentration, and given emphasis in Jesus' statement, "I am working with him."

"I am working with him." This, for me, is the aspect of discipline and hard work involved in praying, and creating--the focus of attention and energy in novel achievement, the determination to persist despite frustration and rejection. Perhaps a sense of "working with God" is necessary to overcome the inertias of a defensive ego, a conviction the Apostle Paul put in these words: "God works in everything for good with those who love him." I believe God works in everything for my good even when I don't love him. But this is to say that petition in praying is for me grounded in such a faith; and it presupposes that "loving God" means MY WORKING WITH HIM in everything for good. Or to put it in Magee's words, petition is for me "identification with the creativity of God, and reverent participation in His work; it is living on the growing edge of the Universe where the future is coming into existence."

So! If petition is basically concerned with "allowing the Father who dwells within to do His work," the first task confronting me is to clarify and cleanse my desire. It seems clear to me that egocentric desire results in illness in body and mind, and conflict and misery in human relations. But "wholesome desire" (symbolized in "loving my neighbor as I love myself") is also always present, competing for attention and fulfillment. Such wholesome desire in me, I am convinced, reflects the authentic growing edge of my selfhood, and the authentic growing edge of mutually-satisfying relations in community life. In prayer this desire (which represents to me the creative thrust of Being Itself) is permitted to come into awareness, take the witness stand, and make a case for its own suggested response to any immediate situation. One task of petition, then, is to discover how "Wholesome Desire" may be expressed in appropriate action. The question of *HOW to achieve what is best* has to be faced. And again, old patterns of coping with life will suggest themselves, but from deep within (if one has his ear attuned to them) alternatives suggested by the Wisdom of God are proposed.

Thus, petition seeks to know the wisdom of the Spirit: *what* is desirable, and *how* to achieve it. And it seeks wisdom with such wholeheartedness that all the forces of "being" are mobilized and released in creative activity for good--though to the eyes of finite man the outcome is always a mystery. However, just because of the

mystery surrounding possible outcomes, petition is an act of faith. It is not just a *cry for help*, but a trustful surrender to the creative moment. This is more than hope--it is confidence which permits serenity--confidence in a God of Wisdom and Purpose who can give meaningful direction to the moment. It is this trustful, reverent devotion to God which I see as the most significant aspect of petition.

XII

I feel the need at this point to try to pull a number of things together, to see if I can get a sense of where I am in this whole matter of praying. And I need to affirm to begin with that for me praying involves both decision and discipline. In a very real way it is an active effort to be passively attentive and responsive to the pulse-beat and purposive thrust of the Universe. I *pray* only when in a very self-conscious way I choose to assume that mental and spiritual posture which allows me to experience a given moment in cosmic perspective: i.e., to get a glimpse of the ongoingness of LIFE and be grasped by the lure of the seemingly impossible possibilities in my "being in the world"--to become aware of, and responsive to, the Creative Thrust of BECOMING that is quietly bubbling up through my being and becoming like a Spring of Living Water. Or, to use a different metaphor, to sense where that Inner Thrust toward ever-new experience is "bursting buds" in the springtime areas of my life, so that I may become more fully a participant in the cosmic enterprise, and share in both the excitement and the grubby work involved in change.

Already in my use of metaphors it is obvious that the primary characteristic of this awareness is the symbolic form in which it comes. Every intimation of my own unique relationship to this Primal Thrust within the fluid life-situation in which I participate is perceived in imagery, *portraying* meanings rather than stating them in logical categories--dramatizing in story form, so to speak, the action being initiated in the depths of my being. When I allow this symbolic language to communicate its own meanings spontaneously, I find myself perceiving my world in ever-new perspective, so that my way of relating to it is continuously being modified.

For me there are several crucial dimensions to such experience:

1. there emerges from the depths of my being the hint of being in relationship with a Concerned Person, making inner resources available which are felt to be sufficient to cope with any confronting threat. In the beginning this was rather fleeting, but a growing confidence in the steadfastness of His personal concern provides both the wisdom and courage to cope experimentally with whatever difficulty I am facing at a given moment. Symbols like a Rock, a Butterfly, a Wise-Old-Man, a Misty-Cloud, a Light, a Tree, or the Wind (to name only a few) represent an ever-present Source of spiritual understanding and strength within which becomes increasingly real and undergirding as test and

retest the certainty of His "being there." Practically speaking, it makes no difference whether I label this "Inner Resource" God or not; what does make a difference is the fact that entering into dialogic relationship with the ever-present Misty-White-Cloud in my inner world is increasingly significant and helpful.

2. as a result I find myself being less and less defensive about exploring my inner world, and facing the fears, gulfs and resentments which distort my relations with others. And because there is no time or space dimension in the inner world it is possible to relive past experiences of any time and place, and to begin to perceive them in new perspective. Negative perceptions are thus replaced by more positive perceptions; and because the associated emotions change accordingly, new energy is available for positive action. This means I am not only freer to evaluate old patterns of relating, but empowered to experiment with such new patterns of relating as are suggested to me symbolically in the process.

3. a third dimension is the opportunity to participate in the experience of other persons with a "here-and-now" sense of seeing-hearing-feeling interaction and dialogue with them. In this way one can enter empathetically into another's agony or joy, and with a keen sense of the "Inner Presence," stand with him on his growing edge to claim the future with hope and confidence. If you believe as I do that separation is only an illusion, and telepathic presence a reality, then such intercessory participation is by no means an idle daydream in an inner-world vacuum, but a significant inter-personal encounter affecting outer-world experience.

Such praying is quite different from the rational approach to praying (verbalized in public worship). Its posture is passive, though admittedly it requires a great deal of discipline to maintain that posture: an alert, courageous, expectant, receptive stance that is willing to face everything that comes into awareness, and relying upon the Creative Presence of God let anything happen that wants to happen. So one comes to reverence God and to rejoice: if you have never been carried aloft on the wings of the wind, it's hard to imagine the tremendous spiritual lift it gives; or if you have never known the strength of a rock in your insides, it's hard to imagine what confidence the feeling of rockness can give. But in this stance of adoration fears can be faced, as well as guilts and hates, in a very direct way; and in their resolution one's perceptual world is so changed as to modify outer-world relations too.

Its posture is passive, and its style is symbolic. All that is provided opportunity for encounter with God. This becomes axiomatic. One learns to expect to meet God at any time, in any place, in some quite unexpected symbolic form; and one learns to count on it. In the inner world this is not mere words, but symbolic reality. And one "knows" God after awhile in the only way one can ever really "know"

God--directly, spiritually, experientially, non-analytically. And one can enter into dialogue with God on a symbolic level and seek His will as it relates to the specific situation one is at that moment confronting.

So this is praying. But "the church" and prayer are co-partners in spiritual growth, and I am convinced they need to be kept together. It is no accident that mystics in both religion and psychology insist on the importance of sharing one's inner world experiences regularly with others engaged in the same search. Two or three gathered together in the spirit of love to share experiences, to help each other to grow toward spiritual maturity and to serve as "the Christ" in the world--this is "the church," and prayer is important to its continuing existence. The experience of praying, and the experience of sharing--each gives impetus to the other, and each is mutually corrective; so both are important in seeking to know God, and to "get with" that "Creative Thrust" moving onto the frontiers of the future.

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